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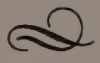

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LIVING MASTERS OF MUSIC
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ALFRED BRUNEAU

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ALFRED BRUNEAU—PRESENT DAY

ALFRED BRUNEAU

BY ARTHUR HERVEY

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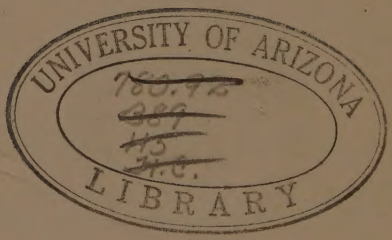

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Une œuvre d'art est un coin de la nature vu à travers un tempérament.

EMILE ZOLA.

INTRODUCTION

THE present age is fertile in musicians of talent. Every country can furnish a goodly contingent of composers thoroughly well versed in everything appertaining to their art, capable of producing interesting works and of presenting these adorned in sumptuous instrumental garb. Comparatively few among these composers, however, possess that element of strong individuality which impresses itself upon an epoch, and, in addition, that sincerity of purpose which stamps the true artist. The history of music furnishes examples of richly gifted composers whose preoccupation to secure immediate success has caused them to forsake their ideals and endeavour to adapt themselves to the prevailing tastes of the period. From a worldly point of view these may be said to have been wise in their generation, and, having bowed the knee unto Mammon, they have reaped their reward. On the other hand, there exist, and have always existed, composers of high ideals, whose principles would not allow them to court public favour by following a course of action repugnant to their innermost feelings. These composers, however, have not invariably been gifted by nature with original genius. Hence the existence of many worthy but dull compositions, the products of sincerity minus inspiration. It is therefore the combination of individuality and

sincerity which produces the really great musician, whose work, be it said, is not invariably appreciated at first : too many instances are there to prove it.

The musical situation in France at the present moment is particularly interesting. Saint-Saëns, a master of universal fame, shows no inclination to lay aside his pen and rest on his laurels. The burden of years sits lightly upon him, and he is ever adding to the already long list of his compositions works in which are revealed the same qualities that have hitherto brought him fame. Massenet is equally active, and scarcely allows the ink to dry on the last page of a work before he eommences a fresh score. Reyer, who is considerably the senior of the above masters, may, on the other hand, be considered to have said his last word with his *Salammbô*, produced in 1890, unless he has been evolving some fresh work on the quiet during these last few years.

Among the younger men who have come prominently forward as composers for the operatic stage, are several who merit consideration. Practically all of these are imbued with modern ideas as to the construction of the musical drama, and have more or less adopted the principles in a general way laid down by Wagner. In some cases the influence of the Bayreuth master has been almost too great and has proved deleterious. In others it has acted as an incentive to further conquests in the realms of sound. The subject of the present volume offers a striking example of this, for whereas some composers have lost themselves in futile efforts to emulate the colossal achievements of Wagner by slavishly imitating him in his methods, and

in endeavouring to wrest from him the secret of his personality, Alfred Bruneau, while fully accepting the leading reforms promulgated by the German master, has given proof of exceptional originality, and has indeed created a special style of musical drama.

The evolution of opera forms a most interesting study, and nowhere more so than in France, where the simple *comédie à ariettes* of the past has gradually developed into the music-drama of the present. I have treated this subject elsewhere,* but it is impossible to avoid alluding to it in the present instance.

Everything in life undergoes a gradual metamorphosis, and all forms are evolved slowly and imperceptibly from others. As regards the musical drama this is a recognised fact. It is as well to begin by admitting that all operatic music is artificial in its nature and is based upon a convention. This indeed is too obvious to need comment. In ordinary life people do not express their thoughts in song, and it is in order that this apparent absurdity should be lessened that Wagner chose legendary subjects for most of his works. Bruneau, for reasons which we shall see later on, has gone to the other extreme, and has preferred to illustrate subjects taken from modern life.

The operatic convention once being admitted, and the fact that an opera must be considered as a play in music, we are already on the high road to the musical drama of the present. The serious operatic composer must henceforth pay the strictest attention to the meaning of the words, and endeavour to provide music which

* "French Music in the XIXth Century." (Published by Grant Richards.)

shall metaphorically carry the drama on its wings. This has been the aim of most great composers. Some of these, however, have been tempted to depart from what should have been their real object, and have sought an ephemeral fame by pandering to the bad taste of the public. The parasitic vocal ornamentation which so long disfigured Italian music has now been abandoned, and, for the present at any rate, composers of all nationalities seem anxious to write music which shall fitly illustrate the drama. This fact may be taken for granted, however much the methods employed by composers of various nations may differ. For a long while in France opera seemed to exist in a state of compromise, and efforts were made to toy with the Wagnerian *leit motiv*, while at the same time retaining the set forms of old. Bruneau's *Le Rêve* heralded an entirely new departure, and its production at the Paris Opéra-Comique in 1891 constitutes an important date in the history of French opera. It is the aim of the author in the present volume to give some account of the composer of the above work, a musician of real originality, an artist of absolute sincerity, whose works only require to be better known in order to be universally admired.

CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHICAL

Louis Charles Bonaventure Alfred Bruneau was born in Paris on March 3, 1857. His parents both possessed artistic natures, his father being musical and playing the viola, and his mother excelling as a painter in pastels. Happily, therefore, the future composer of *Le Rêve* was allowed to follow the bent of his genius without meeting with parental opposition.

Having been admitted to the Conservatoire in 1873, in the class presided over by Franchomme, Bruneau gained the first prize for violoncello playing in 1876. That same year he joined Savard's harmony class, and three years later the composition class presided over by Massenet. In 1880 he obtained an honourable mention for the Prix de Rome, and the next year was awarded the Premier Deuxième Grand Prix de Rome. It must here be explained that there are four of these prizes, the first and second Premiers Grands Prix de Rome, and the first and second Deuxièmes Grands Prix de Rome. These are not all invariably granted. A notable instance occurred in 1864 when Camille Saint-Saëns entered the lists and was defeated by a musician named Sieg, only the first prize being given on this occasion. Bruneau obtained the highest reward given

during his year, the two first prizes not being awarded at all. It is more than likely that the independence of the composer's methods proved somewhat startling to the members of the *juré*, who, however, could not fail to recognise the superiority of the young musician over his competitors, and therefore compromised matters in the above manner.

Bruneau has written a charming account of his student days at the Conservatoire in the class presided over by Massenet. "I see once more," he says, "in the little room where the class took place, M. Massenet, his face encircled by a short and silky fair beard, his long hair brushed back, sitting before the piano and singing with his warm, young, caressing and penetrating voice some example of Gluck, of Wagner, of Saint-Saëns. Some fifty young fellows, French, Belgian, Italian, German, English, surrounded him, a few standing, the others perched on stools and benches, following intently the music which he was passionately analysing. This was the epoch of the prodigious triumphs which had opened the doors of the Institute to the composer, then only thirty-six years old, whose immense reputation attracted to his class students of every nationality, not one of whom was unimpressed by the charm, the wit, the *finesse* of the professor. And I again see M. Massenet in his own home, teaching instrumentation to those of his pupils whom he destined to compete for the prize. There, he sometimes consented to play us some of his works, and I remember, not without pleasure, having had in this way, one morning, the *primeur* of several scenes from *Manon;* he was wont to show us his manuscripts, upon each page of which was related a

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part of his daily life, with, almost always, meteorological observations : ' Seen such and such a pretty person ; fine sunshine. Met some one else; snow or hail.' Something like an orchestrated edition of the Journal of the Goncourt brothers."

The cantata for which Bruneau obtained the prize was entitled *Geneviève.*

It may be interesting here to name some of those composers who were Bruneau's companions in Massenet's class, and who have since distinguished themselves. There were the two brothers Hillemacher, the joint authors of several operas ; Lucien Lambert, composer of *Le Spahi*, and other operas ; Georges Marty, conductor of the Conservatoire concerts and a composer of merit ; Paul Vidal, conductor at the Paris Opéra and composer of *La Burgonde*, &c. ; Xavier Leroux, composer of *Astarté* and *La Reine Fiammette ;* Gabriel Pierné, a composer, conductor, and organist of repute ; and finally Gustave Charpentier, whose *Louise* has proved so great a success.

On leaving the Conservatoire Bruneau sought the advice of César Franck, that noble artist whose influence on modern French music has been so great and who was then the central figure of a group of serious minded young musicians by whom he was regarded with affectionate admiration. At that time he was little known to the outside world, but lived a retired and busy existence, holding his art in the highest reverence, playing the organ at the Church of Ste. Clotilde, teaching and composing. Now he has his statue erected opposite the church where for many years he presided at the organ. It was but natural that an

artist such as Bruneau should have been attracted by the personality of César Franck, and the friendship which sprung up between the two cannot but have proved beneficial to the younger composer.

The period through which nearly every artist must pass, that period which demands the greatest courage and the most wonderful patience, when a musician is striving to become known and is fighting the battle of life, often against very high odds, was now beginning for Bruneau. Many composers at this moment of their career have yielded to the temptation, occasionally excusable it must be admitted, of trying to find a short cut to popularity by pandering to the taste of the great mass of the public and writing music of a trivial description. When it is a question of gaining a livelihood the temptation to throw over principles for expediency is naturally great, and it is, perhaps, scarcely surprising that some composers should have succumbed to it. Bruneau, however, was not built that way, and although obliged to devote himself seriously to the important question of how to make two ends meet, he never for a moment thought of sacrificing his ideals at the altar of Mammon. Strong and sincere in his convictions, he determined to write nothing but what would satisfy his artistic conscience, and to take his chance as to the results. Of stuff such as this are real artists made.

He has related how in order to swell his meagre budget he had accepted the modest and very badly remunerated office of corrector of proofs at a well known publisher's. "There," he says, "I saw many strange things and many strange people. Every day,

from four to six o'clock, in this little *entresol* where so many various and charming arrangements have been concluded, there was an interminable file of composers without libretti, of poets without music, of managers without companies, of vocalists of both sexes without employment, of pleasant idlers, happy to be thrown in contact with serious and celebrated artists and men of letters."

During these days Bruneau was ceaselessly working and actively producing, seeking to bring out the best that was in him, careless of consequences.

His first appeal to the musical public was made at the famous *Concerts Populaires*, directed by Pasdeloup, with an "Ouverture Héroique," which later on was played by the *Association Artistique* at Angers, and "Léda," a *poème antique*. These works were followed by *Kérim*, a lyrical drama in three acts, words by P. Milliet and Henri Lavedan, produced at the Théâtre du Château d'Eau, on June 9, 1887.

About this period he also wrote *Les Bacchantes*, a ballet in two acts and three tableaux, which has not yet been heard, "Penthésilée," a symphonic poem with voice, and the noble Requiem which was produced in London by the Bach Choir, under Sir C. V. Stanford, in 1896.

Bruneau had by this time done more than enough to establish his claim to be considered one of the most rising and promising younger French composers of the day. The moment was, however, approaching when, with a work of astonishing originality and daring, he was to set the seal on his growing reputation.

Certain events occur in the life of every man which are destined to exercise a decisive influence over his

subsequent career. Bruneau's meeting with Emile Zola was one of these. An acquaintanceship casually begun soon ripened into a profound and devoted friendship which was to last until the untimely death of the great French writer.

Zola has said that it was through meeting Bruneau that he began to take an interest in music. Bruneau, on the other hand, has never ceased expressing his enthusiasm for Zola. The fact was that these two artists were made to understand one another. They both had certain points in common—a noble love of truth and an unflinching sincerity of purpose. The result of their friendship was a collaboration resulting in what may be described as a new departure in opera.

Bruneau was anxious to write a musical drama on the subject of "La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret," but Zola had already promised this work to Massenet, whose setting, by the way, if it exists, has not up to the present time been given to the world. Instead of this work, therefore, Zola suggested *Le Rêve*, and Louis Gallet, a well-known man of letters and librettist, was applied to for the purpose of adapting the touching story for the required purpose. Bruneau set to work and on June 18, 1891, *Le Rêve* was produced at the Paris Opéra-Comique with an admirable cast.

The sensation created by this work was very great, and two camps were immediately formed, the one consisting of admirers and the other of detractors. Praised to the skies by some, abused by others, *Le Rêve* was admitted by all to be a work worthy of discussion, and not one to be dismissed with a few words of praise or blame. Its production constitutes

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an important date in the history of French music. On the occasion of its revival at the Opéra-Comique nine years later, the writer who signs himself in the *Figaro* "Un Monsieur de l'Orchestre" alluded to the impression created by the work at the outset in an article, from which the following may be quoted: "It was on June 18, 1891, that the first performance of *Le Rêve* took place. And—one can well say so now that the work has achieved so magnificent a success—this first performance left people undecided. The public, and even the critics, had a moment of hesitation. Without wishing to be severe, this happens to them sometimes, and before the *Rêve*, there had been two works, entitled *Faust* and *Carmen*, which had known the same fate. No one, however, contested the considerable amount of talent expended in the *Rêve*. To begin with, the subject was delicious, and every one knew the powerful, captivating, and moving romance of Zola on which M. Louis Gallet had founded his poem. There was also only one voice to proclaim the high and noble qualities of the score, the accent of sincerity, of penetrating and strong emotion which animated the music of M. Alfred Bruneau. And yet the work, like every really new work, like every real creation, had disturbed and even troubled the spectators. They could not help applauding, but they did not dare to let themselves go entirely, kept back by the prejudices, the conventions, the routine, everything which in the theatre, as in ordinary life, ever places itself between the crowd and progress, between the present and the future. . . . They found themselves face to face with a composer who went straight along his

path, and who, certainly without disdaining the favours of the public, did not wish to purchase these by any concession. One can easily realise that the good public should have been a little astonished, being a sovereign who rather likes to be worshipped. This time the public was not to be so gratified, and, precisely because it had to do with a master, wished to show him some resistance." The article, after recording the success of the revival, how the audience was filled with enthusiasm, how there were several recalls at the end of each act, and an ovation at the close of the work, terminates with the following words: "Alfred Bruneau was already, and had been for a long time, a master for connoisseurs. He is one now for the great public, even for that terrible first night public, so difficult to please, who last night was completely under the spell; Bruneau has made his hearers accept and acclaim his music as it is—I would even venture to add, as he is himself, for it is a fact that often a work and its author bear a resemblance. This is especially true of the author of *Le Rêve*, and I heard that evening some one who knows him well describe him in saying of his music: 'It is loyal like his character, and generous like his heart.'"

Bruneau was now looked upon not merely as a rising composer of talent, but as a distinct personality in the world of art, one whose music had the power of kindling enthusiasm on the one hand, and of provoking antagonism on the other. His symphonic poem "Penthésilée" was produced at one of the Colonne concerts in 1892, and very favourably received. In the meanwhile he was hard at work upon another opera, and on

November 23, 1893, *L'Attaque du Moulin* was brought out at the Opéra-Comique, where it achieved an immediate success, one which found an echo at Covent Garden, where this admirable work was heard the following year.

This stirring tale of heroism made a more immediate appeal than its predecessor had done, for reasons which cannot fail to be obvious to all who are acquainted with both works. Some went so for as to suggest that in his musical setting Bruneau had made concessions to the public, and had adopted a less rigorous system than he had in *Le Rêve*. How far they were justified in expressing this opinion we shall see later on.

A short time after the production of *L'Attaque du Moulin* Madame Bruneau received a visit from M. Bertrand, one of the directors of the Opéra, where Chabrier's *Gwendoline* was about to be produced. Saying that, as he understood that she would like to assist at the first performance of this opera, he had brought her a box, which he now offered her, but on one condition, which was that her husband, with Emile Zola as his collaborator, should write a work for the Académie Nationale de Musique.

Could anything be more charmingly put ?

The offer was accepted, and a pleasant interview resulted in the production, three years later, of *Messidor*. This remarkable work, which has not yet been appreciated at anything like its true worth, was produced at the Grand Opéra on February 19, 1897, and provoked more discussions even than *Le Rêve*, for never had the time-honoured traditions of the house received so great a shock. Indeed, it is perhaps

scarcely surprising that the *habitués* of the Opéra should have been somewhat disconcerted by a work which differed so absolutely from anything to which they had been accustomed.

At this moment of Bruneau's career, when the composer's position had been firmly established, came an event which, though unconnected with music, had the temporary effect of retarding the spread of his works. This was the Dreyfus case.

Every one remembers how, yielding to his enthusiasm for the cause of justice, Zola forsook the quiet of his study and plunged boldly into the arena of strife, risking all for the sake of what he deemed to be right with a sublime disregard of consequences. During the troublous days which followed, Bruneau was his faithful companion, and at the trial, which took place at the Palais de Justice, was ever by his side. France was now divided into two camps, the Dreyfusards and the anti-Dreyfusards, and an inconceivable virulence was imparted into the controversy. Strange though it may seem, the fact of an artist being known to belong to the unpopular camp was sufficient to prejudice some people against his works, and Bruneau found this to his cost.

Happily, nothing endures for ever, and the Dreyfus case having been settled, a saner feeling gradually asserted itself, and the successful revival of *Le Rêve* at the Opéra-Comique, followed by that of *L'Attaque du Moulin* at the same theatre, once more placed the composer on good terms with the public.

The revival of this last work was saddened by the death of Carvalho, the manager of the theatre, whose wife had created the part of Marguerite in *Faust*, when

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Gounod's opera was originally produced, in 1859, at the Théâtre Lyrique under his direction. A great admirer of Bruneau, Carvalho, when the score of *L'Attaque du Moulin* was first played to him, exclaimed in an outburst of enthusiasm: "It will be the glory of my life to have presided over the two great musical evolutions of the century: in 1859, with *Faust;* in 1891–93, with *Le Rêve* and *L'Attaque du Moulin*."

Carvalho's successor at the Opéra-Comique was M. Albert Carré, happily a manager of progressive tendencies and wide sympathies, under whose rule the theatre has thrived gloriously and who brought out *L'Ouragan* on April 29, 1901. This was the last work by the two famous artists which was to be mounted during the lifetime of Zola, for the great author's death took place, as every one knows, suddenly, in the autumn of that very year, to the profound and inconsolable grief of his devoted friend and collaborator.

Zola had, however, completed the book of another dramatic work upon which Bruneau now assiduously laboured. The result was the production on March 3, 1905, at the Paris Opéra-Comique, of *L'Enfant-Roi*, which again brought the name of the composer prominently to the fore.

Since then Bruneau has written another opera, *Naïs Micoulin*, produced at Monte Carlo on February 2, 1907, and a play on the subject of Zola's "La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret," for which he has composed incidental music. This last work was brought out at the Odéon Theatre on February 28, 1907.

Bruneau was created a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour in 1895.

Like Berlioz, he has also devoted himself largely to musical criticism, and is justly considered one of the most remarkable critics of the day.

It would be impossible not to say a few words here concerning the composer's personality. No one who has met Alfred Bruneau can have failed to be charmed by him as a man. Simple and entirely unaffected in his manners, he impresses one by the sincerity, earnestness, and enthusiasm which are revealed in his conversation. Determination is writ strong on his brow, and one realises that here is a man who will be true to his convictions whatever he may have to undergo for their sake. As an example of this it may be mentioned how, when quite a young man, and having won the first prize at the Conservatoire as a violoncellist, he put aside all temptation to gain fame as a virtuoso in order to consecrate himself entirely to composition. Difficulties seem to spur him on to fresh efforts, and having traced his own path, he is determined to follow it in spite of any opposition. The steadfastness of his character revealed itself prominently at the time of the Dreyfus affair when, careless of himself and his own interests, he stood firmly by the side of his friend Emile Zola. Happily wedded to a lady of very superior intelligence, he has found in her a true companion and help, and his happy home is brightened by the presence of a charming daughter.

CHAPTER II

THE ARTIST AND HIS METHODS

BEFORE discussing the works of Bruneau, it will be necessary to explain the aims he has in view, and the methods he pursues in order to attain them. These aims he has himself defined in various articles, and it will be best to let him speak for himself. In a letter which he wrote to the author of these words, not long after the production of *Le Rêve* in London, he said : " Je suis pour l'union aussi intime que possible de la musique et des paroles, et voudrais faire du théâtre vivant, humain et bref. J'aurais aussi l'ambition de traiter une suite de sujets essentiellement français et modernes d'action comme de sentiments."

The intimate union of music and words is of course nowadays the first preoccupation of the composer. In an extremely interesting article entitled "Le Drame Lyrique Français," Bruneau takes it as a generally accepted fact that dramatic music in the present day is freed from the errors of the past, and is returning to truth, to logic, and to beauty. Every sensible man, he says, understands that the musical drama must be composed of " passion, movement, humanity, and not of formulas conveniently modifiable according to the desire of the interpreters ; that the

arbitrary reign of the cavatina, the couplet with vocal ornamentation, so absolutely insignificant, is over, making way for liberty in the arrangement of scenes, tableaux, and entire works. He demands that the *rôle* of the orchestra should no longer be passive, but active—that symphony, in accordance with song, should take part in the drama, comment on the sentiments of the personages of this drama, cast a light on their souls, throw them into the proper atmosphere. He wishes these personages to cease being hampered by the conventional recitative, air, duet, and expects them to act and express themselves according to their characteristics."

Having taken the above for granted, Bruneau proceeds to state that the evolution in question has been due to "the magnificent genius of Wagner." He considers that if the German master's art, "by its splendour, its nobility, its eloquence, its humanity, is universal, by its very spirit it remains absolutely national, and this is what constitutes its greatest strength. Crossing frontiers, overturning the world, disturbing from north to south the most dissimilar minds, evangelising in the four corners of the earth, the providential redeemer, Richard Wagner, did not the less remain German, and in the essence of his works, as well as in their form, he testified his fidelity to the German race."

Bruneau also dwells on the influence exercised by Wagner over composers of all nationalities. Briefly, it may be said that he adheres to the theories of the German master, and considers that it is possible for a composer to do this without abandoning the musical

characteristics of his own nationality. Thus he does not approve of those French composers who have followed Wagner in choosing legendary subjects for their operas. "For my own part," he says, "fervent admirer of Richard Wagner, I have never ceased, in my works and in my criticisms, to defend the cause of French art. In composing *Le Rêve*, *L'Attaque du Moulin*, *Messidor*, dramas not legendary, but contemporaneous, thoroughly French in action and sentiments, I have had the constant and firm desire, in singing the sweetness of mystic love, the abomination of unjust wars, the necessity of glorious labour, of acting as a Frenchman."

It will be seen that Bruneau adopts the Wagnerian method in its entirety, so far as the musical construction of a work is concerned, that is, he builds his operas on *leit motiven*, after the manner employed in the later music-dramas of the German master. On the other hand, he goes to the other extreme in the choice of his subjects, saying, "nothing is so contrary to modernity than the return to the clouds of the legend; nothing is so opposed to the spirit of our race than the conception of happiness in death. We are people who persist in loving the sun and life, for what they contain that is good, comforting, revivifying, and we still believe in joy and beauty on this earth."

In his ardent wish to escape from the operatic conventions of the past, and to realise a type of lyrical drama based upon truth and logic, Bruneau has made a further innovation which has been much discussed. As every one knows, the libretto of an opera has, until lately, always been written in verse—and what verse in some cases! *Le Rêve* and *L'Attaque du Moulin*

being adaptations by Louis Gallet, the first of a novel, the second of a story, both by Zola, the libretto in each case was versified according to the usual custom, which, be it said, did not prevent Bruneau from writing two of his most admirable works or from showing a perfect independence in his musical setting.

A new departure was made by Zola and Bruneau in *Messidor*, the book of which was written in prose. The same plan was followed by the two collaborators in their subsequent works, *L'Ouragan* and *L'Enfant-Roi*.

The idea of writing an opera to a prose libretto had already occurred many years before to Gounod, and the composer of *Faust* had even commenced setting to music Molière's *Georges Dandin*, but the result of his labours has never been given to the world. He expressed his opinions, however, in a preface destined for the above work, saying that in adhering to verse "the musician becomes in a way the slave of the dialogue, instead of remaining its master, and truth of expression disappears under the banal and thoughtless influence of routine; whereas prose, on the contrary, is a fruitful and inexhaustible source in the intonation, whether sung or declaimed, in the length and the intensity of the accent, in the proportion and development of the period."

Berlioz also held somewhat similar opinions, although he did not put them into practice.

The strong desire felt by Bruneau to emancipate himself from the thraldom of operatic routine in any form made him seek all possible liberty of action, which he found in the employment of prose. After the production of *Messidor* at the Paris Opéra, the question

was discussed at length, and Bruneau wrote an article in which he explained in eloquent terms what he considered the advantages of prose over verse, claiming that it gave to the composer "liberty of the phrase, liberty of inspiration, liberty of art, liberty of forms, liberty complete, magnificent, and definite." This article called forth a rejoinder from Saint-Saëns, who had no difficulty in finding many arguments in favour of verse.

The employment of one or the other, after all, depends greatly upon a composer's own feeling. One thing certain is that in many old operas the verses were so distorted in order to fit them to the music that they often ceased to have any shape left. In former days people did not seem to attach much importance to the words of operas, and many were doubtless of opinion that *ce qui est trop bête pour être dit on le chante.* When Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable* was first brought out it was said that the opening chorus was sung to the following words without any one being the wiser :

> La soupe aux choux se fait dans la marmite,
> Dans la marmite on fait la soupe aux choux.

The example set by Bruneau has since been followed by other French composers, notably by Gustave Charpentier in his *Louise*, and Camille Erlanger in *Le Juif Polonais*, and a libretto in prose will soon cease to be an exception.

Another point has to be noticed here.

Alfred Bruneau, as I have mentioned above, aims at the creation of contemporaneous music-drama, his object being to make his music evoke the emotions,

feelings, and aspirations of humanity, and, like his collaborator, Emile Zola, to present realistic pictures of life. This, it may be averred, is very much the same thing that the Italian composers of the present day are doing. Their methods are, however, very different. If Bruneau chooses a subject of contemporary life he is not satisfied with a mere *fait-divers*, the story of some tragic occurrence, but intends his work to have a deeper meaning and his characters to possess a symbolical signification. It must be admitted that this at once raises his operas, to adopt the conventional term, to a higher artistic plane.

Whether Bruneau's works inspire admiration or the reverse, they contain so much that is new that they invite discussion, and this has been amply bestowed upon them by both friends and foes. The criticisms of the latter have possibly been aimed rather at the libretti than at the music, although the composer has not been spared. It is perhaps natural that the partisans of the older operatic forms should be unable to appreciate works constructed upon so entirely different a plan. On the other hand, certain Wagnerians, while approving the composer in his employment of the *leit motiv*, have set their faces against his predilection for modern subjects, recalling the well-known opinions of Wagner respecting the superiority of legendary themes for operatic treatment.

Certainly the question is one which admits of argument, but the result of it all will probably be to show that in this, as well as in many other matters, it does not do to make hard and fast rules, and Wagner himself, when he wrote *Meistersinger*, a work on a non-

legendary subject, proved that he had no intention of curtailing his own liberty. We will see later on that there is a flavour of the legend in the *Messidor* of Bruneau.

These are, however, matters of secondary consideration. Whether the characters in a drama are clad in the skins of prehistoric times, as in the great Wagnerian trilogy, in mediæval dress, as in *Faust*, in picturesque Spanish costumes, as in *Carmen*, or in the more conventional garb of the present day, as in Bruneau's *L'Enfant-Roi*, the main point is that they should speak to us in a language of emotion, touch our hearts, and appeal to our intelligence. After all, *ce n'est pas l'habit qui fait le moine!*

It will be realised that Bruneau's music has little in common with that peculiar form of the art, now so much in vogue, the high priest of which is Debussy. His works are altogether of a more solid, healthy growth. Immateriality, the vague shadowy figures of pre-Raphaelism, the morbid and incoherent utterances of decadent poets—these do not appeal to him. Life in its various manifestations, the joys and sorrows of existence, the aspirations of humanity, the great passions of mankind—these have proved the sources of his inspiration. "Life alone," he writes, "by the magnificent radiance of her immense light of truth, attracts and fills me with enthusiasm. I have faith only in her; I only experience happiness, consolation, encouragement through her, and in coming out of the night, where nowadays one is so often led, I feel a peculiar joy in worshipping the sun." These words occur in the course of an article on Debussy, whose

talent he warmly admires, but with whose tendencies he does not hold. The two composers have certain qualities in common, notably courage and independence of thought. They have freed themselves from the bondage of routine, and thrown the old formulas to the winds. Their ways, however, lie apart, and pursue a parallel course, each leading to the realisation of a different ideal. In the kingdom of music there are, happily, many mansions, and the joy of the true lover of the art is to inhabit these in turns. The one built by Bruneau is already sufficiently striking to merit special attention, as the author of these lines hopes to prove.

CHAPTER III

EARLY WORKS

Le Rêve, the work which may be said to have made the reputation of Bruneau, was not the composer's first opera. It had been preceded by *Kérim*, a lyrical drama in three acts, the book of which was written by Messrs. Henri Lavedan and Paul Milliet. The production of this work took place in the month of May 1887, at the Théâtre du Château-d'Eau, given up for the moment to an operatic enterprise. Brought out in this manner, *Kérim* did not attract the attention that it deserved, for it is a work of real charm and no little originality.

The subject of the opera is taken from a poetical Eastern legend. At Beyrouth in Syria lived an emir who felt very sad because of his hopeless love for a beautiful unknown young girl. As he was resting, she appeared to him and said that in order to win her he must bring her a pearl necklace made of pure and sincere tears shed by a suffering heart. The emir sought far and wide through his states for such tears, but in vain. One night, on returning to his palace by himself, he bent his head and burst into a despairing flood of tears. Then a great light came forth, and as the tears fell through his fingers transformed into pearls, the object of his love appeared and said that she

had come to him, as he had found in his own eyes the pure and priceless tears—those of love.

It is perhaps doubtful whether the above story is sufficiently engrossing to furnish the material of a three-act opera, but the idea is poetical, and the fact of the scene being laid in the East allowed the composer to give an Oriental colour to his music. Already in this work Bruneau reveals a decided individuality of his own, if in the melodic contour of certain of his themes may be detected passing suggestions of the influence of Massenet. What is wholly remarkable is the boldness and independence displayed in the construction of the work, through the consistent employment of *leit motiven*, the same system the composer has followed in his subsequent lyrical dramas. There is great freshness in the melodic inspiration, and the composer has made good use of certain Eastern themes taken from Bourgault-Ducoudray's collection of Greek and Oriental melodies.

Among works anterior in composition to *Kérim* a passing mention may be made of "Léda," a *poème antique* to words by Lavedan, and of an "Ouverture Héroique," both heard at the *concerts populaires* under Pasdeloup, neither of which has as yet been published. "La Belle au Bois Dormant," a symphonic poem founded on the well-known fairy-tale, is also an early work, and remained in manuscript for many years. Having been played with great success at Nantes on the occasion of a festival organised in honour of Bruneau, the composer was induced to have it published, in full score as well as in an arrangement for four hands by Lucien Lambert. Now that this poetical and

refined composition is available one may hope that it will be performed in London.

"Penthésilée," a symphonic poem for voice and orchestra, although heard for the first time in November 1892 at one of the Colonne concerts, was composed before *Le Rêve*. The composer, who was to devote himself strictly to the musical delineation of modern subjects, had already been tempted to treat classical themes. In the present instance he was attracted by a striking poem written by Catulle Mendès on the strife between Penthesilea, Queen of the Amazons, and Achilles, culminating in the death of the fair warrior, who in dying casts on the hero "a look charged less with hatred than with love."

This work occupies a place to itself in the compositions of Bruneau, and already denotes distinct originality, as well as a thorough mastery of resource. Two special motives are intended to personify the heroine—the one typifying the warlike, and the other the feminine, element in her character. The first of these, hurled forth by the four horns in unison, strenuously ushers in the work. The wild rush of the Amazon is suggested by the sort of whirling figure allotted to the strings, under which the bassoons, trombones, and tuba presently assert an impressive theme. An admirable effect is produced later on by the combination of the love theme and the motive of the ride, the first sung by a violoncello solo and harp to the accompaniment of violoncellos and second violins divided and playing harmonics, while the second is gently murmured by the divided first violins soaring aloft. This is one of many admirable orches-

tral combinations to be found in the works of Bruneau. After a long orchestral preamble the voice is introduced and treated throughout in a declamatory fashion, the orchestra commenting upon the sentiments expressed, and the various themes being skilfully transformed.

"Penthésilée" has been repeatedly performed in Paris at the Colonne and Lamoureux concerts, and the author of these lines has had the pleasure of hearing a fine performance at one of the famous concerts of the Conservatoire when the solo part was sung by Mme. Litvinne.

A ballet in two acts and three tableaux, entitled *Les Bacchantes* belongs to about the same period. This has not yet been performed, neither has the score been published. The subject is full of promise, and one may hope that the composer may be induced some day to bring it forward, even if it does not exemplify his present musical and dramatic ideas.

A work of a different character is the noble "Requiem," the original production of which took place in London at one of the concerts of the Bach Choir on February 25, 1896, under the direction of Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, and was performed a few weeks later in Paris at a concert given at the Opéra.

The "Requiem" is an early work; it was written after *Kérim*, and was an outcome of the composer's grief at the loss of his mother. Although it was not performed until some years after its composition, the author did not alter it in any way.

The beauty of its musical inspiration, the constant elevation of its style, and the real power which it

Alfred Bruneau

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reveals entitle this striking setting of the Mass for the Departed to rank high among examples of modern sacred music.

Bruneau has penetrated himself deeply with his subject. He has grasped the inner meaning of the text, and by appealing to the emotions has raised his work to lofty heights. There are, as every one knows, two distinct methods followed in writing music of a sacred character. Some composers, in treating a religious text, seem to shirk all appeal to the emotions and to devote themselves primarily to exhibiting their skill in counterpoint and displaying their ability in the writing of fugues, satisfied if the result of their efforts bears the hall-mark of scientific knowledge. On the other hand, there are sacred works which, to adopt a happy expression of Liszt's, are "prayed rather than composed." It is to the latter category that the "Requiem" of Bruneau belongs.

The very first bars of the opening section strike a note of originality and prepare one for a work cast in a different mould from that consecrated by custom. After the first impressive prayer for eternal rest has come to a end, and the "Kyrie Eleison" has died away in a faint murmur, imploring the Divine clemency, the "Dies Iræ" is thundered forth with terrific power, and when the words *Quantus tremor est futurus* have been delivered in an awe-inspiring whisper by the unaccompanied chorus, the employment of consecutive fifths and octaves producing a peculiarly weird effect, trumpets are heard to the right of the orchestra giving forth the first note of the fine old liturgical chant associated with the Office for the Departed, and these are

answered by trumpets on the left. The effect of this bold and novel setting of the "Tuba Mirum" is very striking.

Berlioz in his "Requiem" endeavoured here to give a realistic idea of the Day of Judgment by employing four sets of brass instruments placed at the four corners of the orchestra. Verdi, in a less ambitious manner, contented himself with a *fanfare* of trumpets gradually increasing in power, and succeeded by a terrified cry of anguish from the entire chorus. Bruneau's method is thoroughly individual and differs from both the above.

The third number, "Quid Sum Miser," so pathetically sad, and "Rex Tremendæ," is very striking. The phrase *Qui salvandos salvas gratis* is set to a melody of peculiar loveliness. The "Recordare" is treated in the form of a duet for soprano and contralto, and is very touching. The "Lacrimosa" commences in a noteworthy fashion with a solo for bass, and a quaint passage is allied to the invocation *Pie Jesu Domine.* The "Hostias," the sixth number, is quite simple, and allotted to a boy's voice accompanied by harps and organ. The beginning of the bright and joyful "Sanctus" is rather suggestive of Gounod, but the continuation is more individual. The tender and suavely melodious "Agnus Dei" is succeeded by the "Lux Perpetua," in which the themes of the opening section are reproduced and which brings the work to an impressive close.

The "Requiem," if it is not altogether so individual as the composer's later works, is nevertheless a composition of very real worth. That it should reveal

here and there the passing influence of Gounod, Massenet, and César Franck is perhaps only natural, and many instances could be adduced where the composer has expressed himself in an unquestionably personal manner.

Allusion may fittingly be made here to the songs written by Bruneau. These are comparatively few in number, but they are none the less highly interesting and eminently characteristic. The collection entitled "Lieds de France" consists of a set of prose poems by Catulle Mendès, written after the manner of ancient popular songs. These have been treated by Bruneau with studied simplicity, so as to keep up their character, which can only be described by the German expression *volkslied*, and yet he has been able to impart to them a thoroughly original turn both in melody and harmony. The same music accompanies all the verses of each song, and in some cases the accompaniment is reduced to the simplest proportions.

The Rabelaisian character of the words of some of the ten songs contained in this album is unfortunately a bar to their becoming popular in this country. This objection, however, does not apply to all, and three admirable songs from this collection, "Les Pieds nus," "L'Heureux vagabond" and "Le Sabot de frêne," have been sung in London with great success.

Three additional "Lieds de France" have been published separately. These are respectively entitled "C'est l'amour qui compte," "La Ronde de la Marguerite," and "Les Mauvaises Fenêtres." The last of these is a really wonderful production, descriptive of the sufferings, the envy, and hatred of one of

the socially disinherited of the world in the presence of affluence beyond his reach. Only a specially gifted artist could render justice to this powerful and highly original work. Musicians would be struck by the manner in which the composer alters the character of the melody by a constantly varied harmonic treatment.

In a delightful set of songs entitled "Chansons à danser" Bruneau has once more had Catulle Mendès as his collaborator, and we again find him in a thoroughly unconventional mood and following a line wholly his own. These are settings of six fanciful poems each of which bears the name of an old French dance. They must not, however, be considered merely as imitations of the style of a past epoch, but rather as musical suggestions of its different characteristics.

Each is distinguished by great originality and possess a peculiar charm and savour of its own. The graceful "Minuet" and the quaint "Gavotte" seem to evoke the spirit of another age, and yet do not suggest any model. The "Bourrée" typifies the sons of the soil in the place of the dainty ladies evoked in the first two pieces. The "Pavane," which sings of the peacock, is exquisite. The most powerful song of the set, however, is the "Sarabande," a little masterpiece in its way. The music of this, admirably descriptive and grimly ironical, reflects the underlying tragedy of the words to perfection. "Le Passepied," a delicately perfumed little song suggestive of a picture by Watteau or Fragonard, brings the collection to an end. The "Chansons à danser" have seen sung in London, and will doubtless be so again. They have been daintily scored by the composer.

CHAPTER IV

"LE RÊVE" AND "L'ATTAQUE DU MOULIN"

The 18th of June 1891 is an important date in the life of Alfred Bruneau, and also, it may be added, in the history of French opera, for it is that of the production of *Le Rêve*, the work which, by reason of its absolute unconventionality, attracted general attention towards its composer. It was at once felt that the musician who, at the outset of his career, could assert so complete an independence and boldly brave the prejudices of the public, was no ordinary man. The style of the music was so new that one can, perhaps, scarcely be surprised if many excellent musicians were at first taken aback and unable to appreciate its beauties. This happened in Paris, and also in London in the course of the same year, when *Le Rêve* was produced at Covent Garden by the late Sir Augustus Harris with the same cast as in the French capital.

The romance upon which this opera is founded occupies a unique place in the works of Emile Zola, and possesses a charm all its own, due possibly to the manner in which realism and idealism are combined. This quality appealed with peculiar force to Bruneau, who stated that "the fusion of the ideal and of reality"

was what had attracted him in this subject, one so beautiful that he scarcely knew any that could compare with it.

Angélique, the heroine of the opera, is a young girl who lives with a dear old couple of embroiderers named Hubert and Hubertine, by whom she was found as a child under the portico of the cathedral and who have brought her up. Of a mystical nature, Angélique spends her leisure moments in reading old legends, and hears voices which predict that she will marry a prince, whose features she associates with a figure in one of the stained-glass windows of the cathedral. She has fallen in love with a young man who bears a strong resemblance to her ideal, and one day during the procession of the "Fête-Dieu" she finds out that he is the son of the bishop Jean d'Hautecœur, who had entered the Church many years previously on becoming a widower. The bishop wishes his son to be a priest, and refuses to consent to his marriage with Angélique. The poor young girl falls grievously ill and is near to death. Her distracted lover implores his father to save her by performing a miracle such as an ancestor of his, who was supposed to possess the power to cure the dying, was wont to do. The bishop consents, and having administered the sacrament of Extreme Unction to the apparently lifeless girl, he bends over her and repeats the motto of his ancestor, *Si Dieu veut, je veux.* The miracle takes place, and in the last scene Angélique is wedded to the prince of her dream, but alas, on leaving the porch, as Bruneau has described it, "she falls on the threshold of that life which she was not to know. Her little soul flies away, and it is a joyful death in a flowery spring time."

The quotation of a few bars of music can be of little use in helping to convey an idea of an important work to those who are unacquainted with this. I will therefore limit myself to a few examples, which may have the effect of stimulating the interest of my readers, and possibly may cause them to study the scores of Bruneau for themselves.

Le Rêve is remarkable for freshness of inspiration and spontaneity of thought. The composer has realised an atmosphere; his characters are not mere puppets, but impress one as of real flesh and blood. Nothing more delicately charming and refined has been presented on the operatic stage than the adorable figure of Angélique, the sweetly fascinating visionary, building castles in her imagination, dreaming of saints and fabulous princes, yet in her own person bearing no resemblance to the unreal and shadowy feminine figures of pre-Raphaelitism.

The bishop Jean d'Hautecœur is another admirably drawn character. Unctuous and grave, the stern yet kindly prelate in a measure dominates the work. Outwardly he suggests the typical French priest moving amidst the surroundings of church and sacristy. The music, however, tells in poignant accents that in the innermost depths of the ascetic cleric's heart the wound caused years ago by the death of his young wife has remained unhealed.

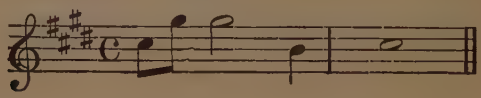
The kindly old embroiderers are also most felicitously characterised, and stand out on the musical canvas as engaging and attractive figures.

As I have already explained, the score of *Le Rêve* is strictly Wagnerian in the sense that it is entirely

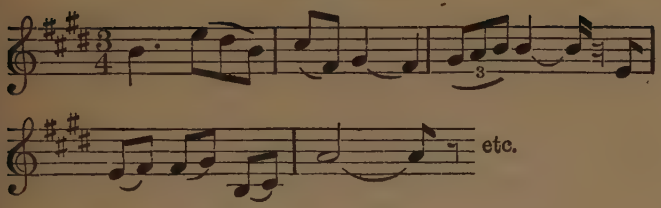
constructed upon a symphonic foundation of leading themes. Bruneau's indebtedness to the German master, however, goes no further. In his melodies and harmonies he is profoundly original, and the lucidity of his thought prevents him from getting lost in a mazy tangle of notes. Neither does he follow the example of some of his contemporaries and seek the cloudlands, through the obscurity of which all design becomes difficult to define. A dreamer and a poet, he is yet eminently sane in his methods.

Some years have elapsed since *Le Rêve* was produced, and the composer's absolute harmonic independence would now doubtless not provoke the same feeling of animosity it did at the outset. It must be remembered that no French composer had at that time attempted any operatic work of a nature so subversive and so free from compromise. Since then a new type of music-drama has been accepted, and other composers have entered through the door opened by Bruneau.

Le Rêve has no overture. Dramatic composers, unfortunately, seldom write one nowadays. A short prelude, in which are heard five *leit motiven*, leads without break into the opening scene. The first of these themes, strenuously asserted by the clarinets, bassoons and brass instruments, is associated with the bishop's motto, *Si Dieu veut, je veux*:

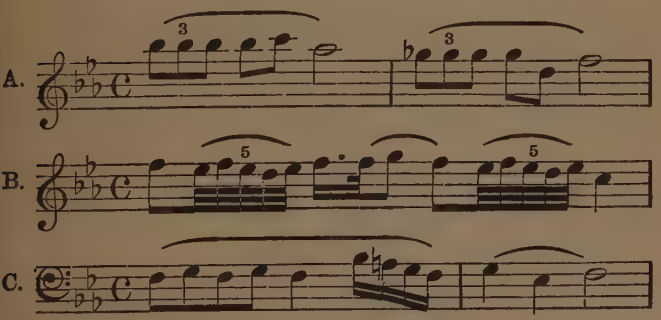


It is succeeded by a lovely melody connected with the death of Angélique :



Objection has been raised against this theme by an admirer of the composer, on the score that it partakes somewhat of the nature of a melody, and is too long for a *leit motiv*. At a moment when melody is unfortunately rather at a discount, most people will not, however, feel inclined to blame a composer for cultivating it.

As the curtain rises, Angélique is deeply absorbed, reading the "Golden Legend," and the three following themes associated with her thoughts of saints and legends, and destined to be prominently employed throughout the work, are heard in succession :



All this opening scene, including the dialogue between the kindly old couple Hubert and Hubertine with their

adopted daughter, is delightfully treated. Angélique, left alone, reading the "Golden Legend," fancies she hears voices, and the composer has here realised the most beautiful and original effect in a delicious mystical chorus of female voices seemingly floating in the air. She is brought back to reality by the reappearance of the embroiderers and the entrance of the bishop, whose *leit motiv* is grave and solemn—perfectly appropriate to his character.

A striking episode is that in which the bishop explains the origin of his motto, how an ancestor of his during a plague was able to perform a miracle and cure the sufferers. A succession of harmonies purposely repulsive is succeeded by an enchanting theme descriptive of the miracle, where a certain affinity may be discovered with a passage in the "Beatitudes" of César Franck.

The lovely melody sung by Angélique when telling the bishop of her visions is another salient feature of the first act, the second scene of which is laid outside the cathedral and commences with a joyful popular old French song. The arrival of the lover and the declaration of his feelings have been very happily expressed. The second act shows no falling off and contains a particularly expressive theme, admirably treated in the orchestra, which is intended to outline the tender and affectionate disposition of the dear old couple of embroiderers.

The second scene in this act, in the chapter-house of the cathedral, is altogether masterly. The bishop is tortured by doubts as to the best course to pursue with regard to his son, whom he wishes to preserve from the

sorrows of the world by devoting him to the priesthood. In a monologue of striking force and astonishing variety he takes the firm resolution to oppose strenuously any idea of marriage between Félicien and Angélique. This resolution he imparts to the old embroiderers, affirms it to his son, and reiterates it to the young girl, who has come to plead her cause, and does so in the most touching and insinuating manner, though to no purpose.

In the following act, which takes place in Angélique's room, the lovers meet, and after vainly endeavouring to persuade the young girl to follow him, Félicien leaves in despair, while Angélique aspires to die like the saints she has read about. This act closes with the beautiful melody heard in the Prelude.

The first scene of the fourth act, describing the interview between the bishop and his son, who has come to tell his father that Angélique is dying and to try and induce him to save her, is altogether admirable, and on a par with the previous scene in the cathedral chapter. It culminates when Félicien, incensed beyond endurance at the bishop's refusal to come, invokes the memory of his mother, who died in giving him birth, and accuses his father of never having loved her. The bishop, stunned by the blow, falls on his knees vanquished, his spirit broken. The son has gained his cause, the memory of the woman so devotedly loved has prevailed. The bishop rises and uttering the words "*Si Dieu veut, je veux*," prepares to fulfil his mission. This is not only one of the finest scenes in the work, but one of the most remarkable ever realised on the operatic stage.

The end of this profoundly touching and inspired work is on a par of beauty with the rest.

The recollection of the production of *Le Rêve* at Covent Garden during an autumn opera season in 1891 remains a treasured memory with me. The impression then conveyed was a never-to-be-forgotten one. A new musical horizon seemed to be disclosed, and a fascination such as I have seldom experienced drew me to the theatre at each of the too few performances of this very unique work. The admiration then kindled has never diminished; but has been intensified by increased familiarity.

Musicians will not have forgotten the sensation produced by *Le Rêve* * or the discussions that ensued concerning the music. The time has surely arrived when an opportunity should be afforded of hearing this work again, and if this should happen, it is safe to predict the reversal of some hastily expressed opinions.

In Paris the work was naturally discussed with great vehemence. *C'est une partition parfumée* was the reply of Gounod to a demand for his opinion, and the composer of *Faust* was not wrong, for the flowers of melody abounding in this fascinating work do indeed exhale a strange and captivating perfume.

* *Le Rêve* was interpreted at the Paris Opéra-Comique by the following artists: Mdlle. Simonnet (Angélique), Mme. Deschamps (Hubertine), M. Engel (Félicien), M. Bouvet (Jean d'Hautecœur), and M. Lorrain (Hubert). Besides Paris, it has been performed at Lyons, Marseilles, Nantes, Angers, and other French provincial towns; at Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent, and other Belgian towns; in London, and at Hamburg. In this last city it was conducted by Herr Gustav Mahler, and the part of Hubertine was undertaken by Frau Schumann-Heink.

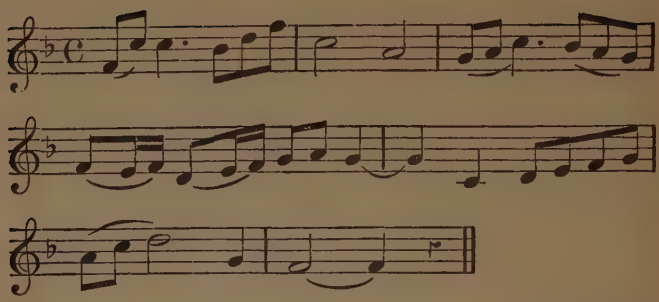
In *Le Rêve* Bruneau treated a subject impregnated with a dreamy mysticism, and his next opera, *L'Attaque du Moulin*, affords altogether a direct contrast to the earlier work.

It is founded upon the story of that name contributed by Emile Zola to the volume entitled "Les Soirées de Médan," a collection of tales by different authors, the other writers being Guy de Maupassant, J. K. Huysmans, H. Céard, Léon Hennique, and Paul Alexis.

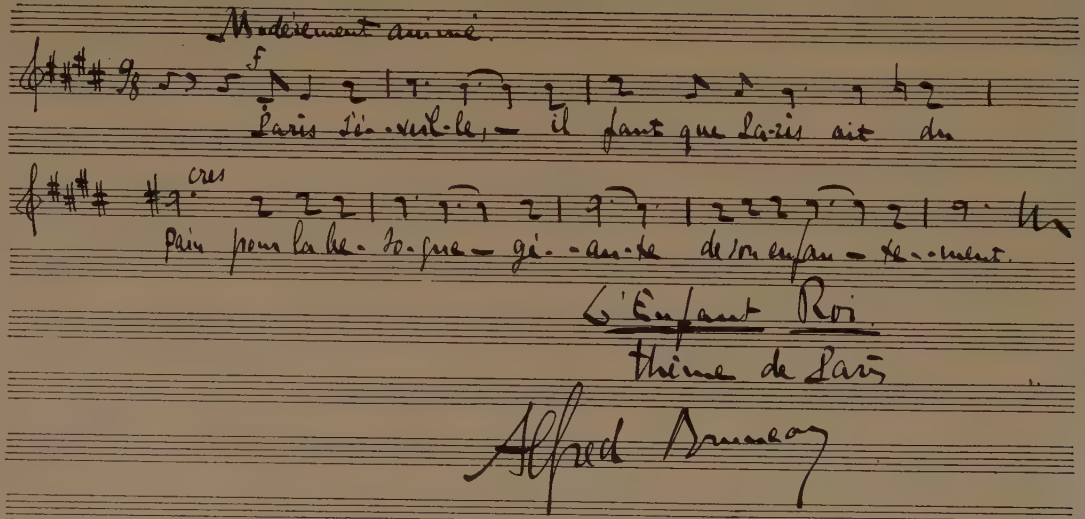
A stirring episode of the Franco-German war of 1870, it abounds in powerful and dramatic situations. The operatic adaptation is by Emile Gallet, who had performed a similar task in *Le Rêve*.

The same sincerity, dramatic feeling, melodic flow and individuality of expression noticeable in *Le Rêve* are present in *L'Attaque du Moulin*. Yet the latter work is of a more generally popular description, owing perhaps to the fact that it possesses certain affinities with the conventional type of opera, and that the composer, if he has shown himself equally individual in his mode of utterance, has in some ways been less aggressive in the assertion of his independence. The score is again strictly founded upon representative themes, like *Le Rêve*, and is also free from *banalités* or concessions to vocalists. In the present work, however, Bruneau makes considerable use of the chorus, which was almost silent in *Le Rêve*.

"Jamais une paix plus large n'était descendue sur un coin plus heureux de nature." These words, which head the score, are expressed in a short prelude, based upon the following beautiful melody:



The first act is descriptive of peace. The miller Merlier is celebrating the festivities of the betrothal of his daughter Françoise with Dominique, a young Flemish peasant. The music here is instinct with life and animation, and the choruses of villagers are bright and attractive. The exuberant delight of Merlier and the childish pride he takes in his mill and occupations are admirably described. Very poetical is the scene of the betrothal. Happiness reigns supreme and the general content is felicitously reflected in the music. Suddenly a drum is heard from without. The drummer enters and states that war has been declared and that all able-bodied men will be required at the frontier. The first tragic note has been struck. Then follows one of the most remarkable scenes in the work. Marcelline, the foster-mother of Françoise, rises and, in powerful accents, bitterly declaims against the horrors of war. She recalls, in an admirable passage, how she once had two sons who were taken from her to die on the field of battle. It has been said that Marcelline was intended to suggest France mourning the loss of Alsace and Lorraine. This may or may not be so. Her



SPECIMEN OF ALFRED BRUNEAU'S MANUSCRIPT

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expression of horror at the wickedness of war which has deprived her of her children is intensely human and deeply pathetic. This scene used to be declaimed with wonderful power by Mdlle. Delna, who created the part in Paris, and also played it in London.

The second act opens with an exact reproduction of Alphonse de Neuville's celebrated picture "La dernière cartouche." A strikingly realistic orchestral interlude of a martial description tells that the war is in progress. The mill has been attacked, and the French are about to retreat. Dominique, being Flemish by birth, has not had to serve. On the arrival of the Germans he is seized, and as his hands show marks of gunpowder, he is condemned to be shot at daybreak. In a beautiful soliloquy he bids farewell to Françoise, who afterwards joins him in a lovely duet.

The third act commences with a singularly original and pathetic scene. A sentinel is keeping guard and singing a plaintive ditty. Marcelline approaches and questions him concerning the reasons that have brought him there. He dreamily answers that he knows not why he came, and pathetically alludes to his mother and his betrothed, both of whom are awaiting him far away. Then, suddenly remembering himself, he bids her move on. This scene has been criticised—with a certain amount of reason, it must be admitted. The unlikelihood of a sentinel on duty so far forgetting himself as to enter into a sentimental conversation is sufficiently evident. Zola has here again intended to show the inanity of war, with its attendant horrors, by painting the anguish of the mother, and the ignorance of the soldier concerning

that for which he is risking his life. The scene may be improbable, if taken as actually occurring, but the idea is deep and touching, and the musician has been so happily inspired here that one passes willingly over any seeming incongruity. After all, a poet must be allowed a certain amount of licence.

This sentinel is as unreal as the shepherd in *Messidor*. He allows himself to be surprised by Dominique, who creeps up with a knife and stabs him. Attracted by his cry, a few German soldiers rush in and are horrified when they perceive their dead comrade. The alarm is given, and it is discovered that Dominique has made his escape. The German captain then declares that if he is not found Merlier must suffer in his stead. The act ends most impressively with a solemn dirge sung by the soldiers over the body of the sentinel.

The drama now thickens. Morning has dawned. Merlier has determined to devote himself in order to save the life of Dominique, who under the cover of the night has reappeared. He pretends that he has been given his liberty and persuades Dominique to go and join the French troops. An admirable scene follows between Merlier and Françoise, in which the father recalls his daughter's childhood, and bids her farewell, she being in the meanwhile ignorant of his impending fate. Sounds are heard in the distance heralding the approach of the French. The Germans, who are in small numbers, prepare to retreat. Before doing so, however, they seize hold of Merlier and lead him out. The sound of fire-arms tells that the heroic miller has met his fate. Almost immediately appear

the French captain, Dominique, and a troop of French soldiers shouting "Victory." Françoise utters a cry of agonised horror, and the curtain falls upon the exclamation of Marcelline: "Oh, la guerre; héroique leçon et fléau de la terre."

Thus ends this most stirring and profoundly moving musical drama, which on the occasion of its production in London at Covent Garden on July 4, 1894, created so profound a sensation, and yet has been so unaccountably neglected since its revival three years later. The verdict of the Press was practically unanimous, and the work was hailed as a masterpiece.

On the occasion of its production at the Paris Opéra-Comique the action of the piece was thrown back a hundred years, for reasons which are obvious. In London, however, the work was presented according to the original intentions of the authors, with the costumes of 1870. That the general effect of the opera gained greatly thereby cannot be doubted.

L'Attaque du Moulin * finally consecrated the reputa-

* *L'Attaque du Moulin* was interpreted at the Paris Opéra-Comique by Mme. Leblanc (Françoise), Mdlle. Delna (Marcelline), M. Vergnet (Dominique), M. Bouvet (Merlier). It has been performed on more than a hundred stages.

The following extracts from the London Press will be sufficient to give an idea of the impression conveyed by this admirable work on the occasion of its production at Covent Garden:

The Times.—"A masterpiece of art. . . . A story of thrilling human interest. . . . An opera the like of which has seldom been seen. . . ."

The Morning Post.—"Music wonderfully expressive and striking. A most stirring and profoundly moving music-drama. . . . A work which we unhesitatingly accept as a masterpiece."

The Daily Telegraph.—"A work singularly interesting and

tion of Bruneau, and if merit were the first consideration it should now occupy a place in every operatic *répertoire*.

singularly beautiful. . . . There is not only a present for Bruneau's work, but also a future. . . . The music is melodious, smooth, and thoroughly dramatic."

The Standard.—"One of the most powerful lyric dramas of a tragic character that has seen the light for many years . . . beautiful and original music."

The Daily News.—"Will certainly become a popular work."

The Morning Advertiser.—"Arias and duets which would have done credit to the pen of a Gounod."

The Daily Graphic.—"Dramatically and musically of engrossing interest."

The Globe.—"An extraordinarily fine and masterly composition. . . . Certainly one of the most interesting works that has been heard at Covent Garden for some time."

The Pall Mall Gazette.—"Truly melodious and organically vital."

The Observer.—"Nothing more admirable has been brought before English opera-goers for years . . . music so expressive and beautiful, so subtle and unobtrusive that only a genius could have written it."

The Weekly Despatch.—"A masterpiece of originality, beauty, and virility."

The Sunday Times.—"A model of what an opera should be."

The Referee.—"Bruneau's music is as fresh and beautiful as anything heard for many years. . . . The use of leading themes is so masterly as almost to indicate that the mantle of Wagner has fallen upon the composer."

The Era.—"The work is a masterpiece."

CHAPTER V

"MESSIDOR"

The discussions called forth by *Le Réve* and *L'Attaque du Moulin* were renewed with increased vigour on the appearance of *Messidor* at the Paris Grand Opéra. The two previous works were founded the one upon a novel, the other upon a tale by Emile Zola. In the present instance, however, the famous novelist was his own librettist and the book an entirely original one. As has been previously stated, the customary versification had been discarded in favour of prose. The subject, modern and realistic yet symbolical and to a certain extent legendary, was well calculated to surprise the public of the Grand Opéra.

Having been asked to explain his intentions, Emile Zola did so in the pages of the *Figaro*, commencing his article with the following eloquent words:

"Ce que j'ai voulu faire?

"Donner le poème du travail, la nécessité et la beauté de l'effort, la foi en la vie, en la fécondité de la terre, l'espoir aux justes moissons de demain. Imaginer, dans notre pays de France, un village, des montagnes ou les ruisseaux roulent de l'or et dont les habitants ont vécu jusqu' à ce jour de la récolte de cet or; et, là faire qu'un d'eux ait capté tout l'or, en détournant les

ruisseaux, ce qui a ruiné le village entier; et, dans une catastrophe, anéantir l'or, rendre l'eau à la terre pierreuse et inculte, d'où monte l'auguste moisson du blé, lorsque, de laveurs d'or qu'ils étaient, les hommes sont devenus des laboureurs."

Life, productiveness, labour, health, fertility, in other words, an optimism derived from nature herself—such is the basis upon which is founded the book of *Messidor*.

At the close of his article, Zola states that he believes the *rôle* of the poet is "to give the musician a large theme where are developed the general ideas and the great sentiments of humanity." He concludes by stating that he will be simply happy if he has furnished the musician with the occasion of affirming "that joy, that health, the eternal happy fertility, the great, clear and powerful sun of France."

The above will be sufficient to show what a distance separates the book of *Messidor* from the conventional libretti of the traditional opera, and the author's artistic intentions can scarcely be denied even if in their realisation they are open to criticism. The fact of the libretto being in prose was in itself sufficient to furnish matter for discussion. This, after all, ought to be a matter for the composer to decide. There should be entire liberty for him to set either prose or verse to music, as his inspiration may dictate. Bruneau has, for reasons already stated, expressed himself in favour of prose and he has been justified by results. This question of prose *versus* verse, concerning which so much ink was used, may be dismissed and should not be allowed to draw attention away from the great

value of the work which brought the discussion to the fore.

The book of *Messidor* may be open to certain objections, but it also possesses undeniable qualities. Each one of the principal characters may be taken as symbolising an idea. Thus we have Guillaume, the honest husbandman, typifying human labour; Mathias, the evil-minded workman, who stands for anarchy; the shepherd, a delightful creation, representative of the spirit of contemplation and love of nature; Véronique, the mother of Guillaume, standing for superstition, or, as Zola puts it himself, "the old faith, still so great, which is waiting to be replaced by the new faith"; Maître Gaspard, the typical employer of labour; and Hélène, the eternal feminine, destined to be the bride of Guillaume and—once more to quote Zola—to ultimately become *la mère féconde.*

It will be realised that we are far indeed from the usual tale of love, jealousy, revenge which has done duty in different guises for so many operas of the past.

The scene is laid in a valley of Bethmale, where the inhabitants once lived in happiness and ease, washing the gold produced by the torrent, until one of them, a certain Gaspard, having succeeded in turning away the waters, built up a fortune, thereby ruining the others. The gold-washers find that the land, deprived of water, has dried up and refuses to fertilise. Guillaume, a good and honest young labourer, lives with his mother, Véronique, and spends his days ineffectually in trying to cultivate his meagre plot of land. He loves Hélène, the daughter of the wealthy Gaspard, but his mother does not approve of his choice, as she suspects Gaspard

of having assassinated her husband, who some time previously had been found dead in a ravine. This would not stem the course of Guillaume's affection, if the young girl, deeming herself too rich, although she loves, did not refuse to marry him. A certain Mathias, cousin to Guillaume, a bad and good-for-nothing workman, returns from the town bringing with him ideas of discontent and revolution. He and Guillaume, irritated by the refusal of Hélène, induce the peasants to plot against Gaspard and wreck his water-mill. On a winter-day, in the midst of a tempest, the crowd rushes to accomplish its work of destruction, but nature is beforehand—a huge rock torn from its bed by the fury of the elements crashing into the torrent and turning it out of its course, thereby depriving the mill of water and thus ruining Gaspard. The streams now overrun the land and bring with them the desired fertility. Peace and plenty gradually return to the inhabitants. Guillaume, however, still pines for Hélène. Mathias is now caught in the act of stealing in the house of Véronique. When arrested, he owns, in a moment of fury, that it was he who killed the father of Guillaume for the sake of a piece of gold. Hélène having become poor, all obstacles to her union with Guillaume are now removed, and the work, which commenced in misery and despair, concludes in joy and prosperity amidst the gorgeous surroundings of a glowing summer day with the golden corn ready for the harvest.

Such, in brief, is the story of the work, the title of which Zola has taken from the old Republican calendar.

In the above tale the author has introduced a legendary ballet which has enabled the composer to write some very admirable music, but which is quite unnecessary to the development of the drama.

Although the *dramatis personæ* of *Messidor* all belong to humble life, are children of the soil, yet the language they speak is certainly not that of the peasant, and the author has shrunk, and quite rightly so, from making them express themselves like the labouring men in *Germinal* or *La Terre*. Zola has taken the opportunity here of preaching a sermon on what was one of his favourite themes, to which indeed he returned in one of his latest novels, *Fécondité*. The allusions to the reproduction of the species which occur in *Messidor* naturally did not escape comment, and were much criticised. Certainly one can with difficulty imagine a young girl expressing herself in these terms to her lover, "Toi seul fera de moi l'épouse heureuse, la mère, féconde!" any more than a young labouring man speaking thus to his mother of his sweetheart, "Oh! ma mère, c'est l'amour qui fait la vie, c'est l'amour qui embrase tout, sans lequel rien ne se crée. Je l'aime, elle est ma joie, ma force et ma fécondité!" These peasants are clearly not ordinary peasants. They are poets, dreamers, philosophers, as well as toilers. The shepherd, for instance, who has not much to do with the action of the piece in which he is one of the most attractive figures, typifies the spirit of contemplation and is essentially a dreamer, probably as unlike as possible to any actual guardian of cattle, yet a delightful creation.

In setting to music the remarkable and unconventional book of Zola, Bruneau has been actuated by the

following intentions, which he has described in language as eloquent as that of his collaborator:

"Ce que j'ai voulu faire?"

"Unir aussi intimement que possible la musique au poème. Par le moyen des sons, sans que cela porte préjudice à la bonne harmonie de l'œuvre, à son équilibre, dessiner de manière très différente les six personnages de ce poème, chantant, les uns et les autres, selon la logique de leurs caractères, selon la vérité du drame. A l'aide des multiples couleurs instrumentales, mettre ces personnages dans l'atmosphère changeante des quatre saisons de l'année, en lesquels se passent les quatre actes de la pièce, et mêler ainsi la voix mystérieuse et puissante de la nature au cri de passion et d'espérance que jette toute âme humaine. . . . Ecrire librement, sans souci des querelles d'écoles, une partition d'indépendence et de franchise où, en toute fidélité, se reflète l'esprit de notre race, où le besoin d'imprévu et de nouveau mais aussi de saine raison et de belle clarté qui reste en nous soit satisfait."

The score of *Messidor* reveals a great musician, an exceptionally gifted artist, and a true poet. It is the work of one in full possession of his powers, and is notable for loftiness of conception, individuality of thought, and virility of accent. In the above-quoted words, the composer has expressed his intention of placing his characters in the changing atmosphere of the four seasons of the year. In so doing he has been most happily inspired.

Nature has proved a source of inspiration to many great composers, and the glories of the summer sun have

ALFRED BRUNEAU'S COUNTRY HOUSE

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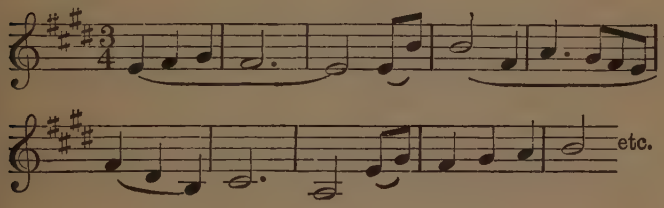
been reflected in works as different as Haydn's *Seasons*, Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony, Mendelssohn's Italian Symphony, Berlioz's *Harold in Italy*, Wagner's *Siegfried*, Gounod's *Mireille*, Bizet's *L'Arlésienne*, &c. Already, in *L'Attaque du Moulin*, Bruneau had shown how strongly he was influenced by the feeling of nature. In *Messidor* this sentiment is greatly developed, and, indeed, reigns triumphantly throughout the score. The beautiful prelude to the fourth act, descriptive of springtime, stands out as a notable example of this. The melody upon which it is founded is a veritable inspiration:



The system followed by Bruneau in *Messidor** is the same as that employed in his previous operas. The representative themes he uses are characteristic, and their treatment reveals the composer's mastery.

It has been pointed out, with truth, that in his desire to adhere strictly to his own idea of what a musical drama should be Bruneau has created many difficulties for himself by scrupulously avoiding anything which

* *Messidor* was interpreted at the Paris Opéra by the following artists: Mdlle. Berthet (Hélène), Mme. Deschamps-Jehin (Véronique), M. Alvarez (Guillaume), M. Delmas (Mathias), M. Renaud (le Berger), M. Noté (Gaspard). Besides Paris, it has been performed at Brussels, Nantes, and in Munich.

might detract from the loftiness of his musical conception: This highly laudable sentiment adds to the artistic value of his works, if it places an obstacle against their acquiring a wide popularity.

As I have previously remarked, Bruneau differs from some of his contemporaries by the lucidity of his ideas, and this is again evidenced in *Messidor*. The love theme, for instance, is a really beautiful melody which occurs several times in the course of the work. The splendid "Sowing Song," sung by Guillaume, bold and vigorous, carries one away by the irresistible swing of its powerful rhythm. All the music connected with the shepherd is admirably conceived and seems to float in a pastoral atmosphere. The legendary ballet is in itself a tone poem of great originality. There is no reason why this should not be performed in the concert room, as it was at the Paris Exhibition of 1900. Altogether, *Messidor* is a work of very high and superior worth, as lofty in design as it is original in execution.

CHAPTER VI

"L'OURAGAN" AND "L'ENFANT-ROI"

In *Le Rêve* Bruneau had set to music a chaste story of maiden love, and enveloped this in an atmosphere of mysticism, the action of the touching tale taking place amid the romantic environments of a quaint old cathedral town. In *L'Attaque du Moulin* he had exposed the horrors of useless wars in strong, virile, and pathetic accents. In *Messidor* he had celebrated the triumph of honest labour, stigmatised the evil wrought by the unscrupulous pursuit of gold, and sung the praises of the vivifying fertility of the soil.

In *L'Ouragan* the background of his musical canvas was to be the sea, now calm, now boisterous, the main theme of the work being the inward tempest raging in the hearts of the principal characters in a drama of outward passion.

The authors, in a preface, expressed their intentions to be the writing of a work in which the human passions, let loose, should be pushed to their paroxysm.

The action takes place in the isle of Goël.

"It is useless," the authors tell us, "to look for this island upon a map, as one would not find it. It is everywhere and yet nowhere; the intention of the

authors has been to place it in time and space, in order that it should be of all nations and all epochs. It has appeared to them that their human drama would gain in simplicity, in clearness, and in strength by remaining in its pure humanity, uncomplicated by any contingence. Their island is where couples exist who love, suffer, weep and hope in the tempest of their hearts and of the elements."

The island of Goël is inhabited by a population of fisher-folk. Of the two principal families four descendants now remain, two sisters, Marianne and Jeanine, and two brothers, Richard and Landry.

Marianne, the elder sister, who loves Richard, has prevailed upon Jeanine to marry Landry. Richard and Jeanine, however, have mistaken for a warm affection what was really ardent love, though Richard, being fifteen years the elder, has never declared his feelings. Marianne, whose dream it has been to marry Richard, and ultimately become the Queen of Goël, has persuaded him to leave the island for ever, telling him that his younger brother is in love with Jeanine. The marriage between Jeanine and Landry has taken place, and Richard has been away for years. When the drama begins we find that Landry has taken to drink, and, in consequence, ill-treats his wife. The boats are setting out accompanied by the joyful songs of the fishermen. A storm having arisen, a ship is cast ashore, and in it is the long-absent Richard, who is accompanied by Lulu, a child of some fifteen summers, whom he has saved from peril in a distant land, and who has vowed eternal gratitude and unswerving devotion to him.

Finding himself in his old home Richard cannot resist the desire to see Jeanine, and arrives in time to save her from being struck by his brother Landry in a drunken fury. He takes her away, and is able to hide her in a beautiful valley leading to the Baie de Grâce, where abounds a luxuriant and tropical vegetation, and where stands a huge tree, which is looked upon by the inhabitants as a sacred sanctuary for those lovers who take refuge under its branches.

At the commencement of the second act Jeanine is resting in this charmed spot, watched by Lulu. On awaking, however, she discovers that her revengeful sister has found her retreat. Finding that she cannot persuade Jeanine to leave the sacred tree, Marianne goes to fetch Landry. Richard now arrives, and the two lovers exchange vows in a long and passionate scene, at the close of which Marianne reappears with Landry. The latter wishes to kill his brother at once, but Marianne dissuades him from doing so in this privileged spot, and bids him wait until evening.

The third act takes place in Marianne's house. A fearful tempest is raging outside, and the wailing voices of the fishermen's wives anxiously awaiting their husbands are heard from without. Marianne knows that Richard has arranged to leave and to take Jeanine with him. Sooner than he should belong to another woman she would prefer to see him dead. She endeavours fruitlessly to keep him by offering him her love and wealth. Landry now appears and wants to fight Richard in a duel with knives. The latter, however, refuses to touch his younger brother, whom he formerly was wont to protect. Landry thereupon

throws himself upon him, when Marianne, in a sudden reversion of feeling, rushes forward and stabs the husband of Jeanine in the back. The whole of this act has been treated by the composer with wonderful strength, and the effect produced is very great.

In the fourth and last act of this strange and unconventional drama the strained situations are curiously resolved.

The storm is over, the tempest is appeased. Richard and Jeanine are about to leave for other and fairer climes, when with feminine inconsistency the latter begins to waver, feeling loth to abandon her native land, though Marianne no longer opposes her departure. Richard, however, is anxious to leave as soon as possible, and will not hear of remaining. Gradually he realises that the only solution to the situation lies in renouncement. At that moment Lulu arrives, informs him that his ship is ready, and urges him to hasten his departure. This finally decides him. He will leave the sisters, now reconciled, to console each other as best they can, and will go with Lulu far away, into the unknown, to some land of dreams.

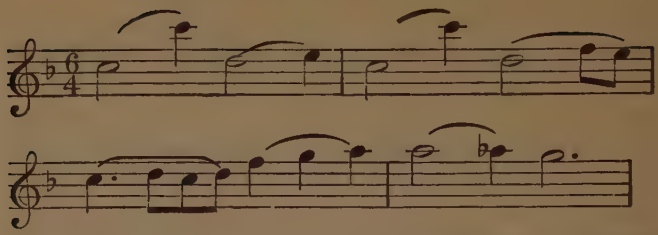
Alike to those in *Messidor*, the characters in *L'Ouragan* are all symbolical. Three different incarnations of Love are represented in the three heroines of the drama: Jeanine, typifying the essentially passionate and sensual woman, acting upon impulse and without much moral restraint; Marianne, symbolising the domineering, energetic woman destined to command, yet a prey to her own passion and jealousy; lastly, Lulu, who represents the ideal, the dream, the charm of the unknown. In Richard is expressed the spirit of

duty, whereas Landry typifies the man who through weakness has become as bad as he formerly was good.

It will be realised that if the above drama is open to certain objections, one being its prevailing sombreness, yet its great psychological significance, its powerful situations, and strong characterisation offer the composer great scope for the exercise of his imagination.

Bruneau, in setting it to music, has applied his whole soul to faithfully translating into tones the varied emotions of the characters in Zola's drama. The work reveals in every page the enthusiasm, the energy, the sincerity, and also the commanding mastery of the composer. Nowhere has he shown less inclination to compromise or proved himself more thorough in his determination to realise his ideal of a music-drama. The themes are again entirely individual, and the music, indeed, throughout, bears the unmistakable stamp of its authorship. Gustave Charpentier, the composer of *Louise*, in an enthusiastic article on *L'Ouragan*, laid stress upon the fact that the work "from the first note to the last" was Bruneau's entirely. "Bruneau ever more completely himself, whose mastery follows so evident a progression that even his enemies do not try to deny it."

The following beautiful theme, with which the opera commences, is intended to be the *leit motiv* of the sea, and is subjected to numberless transformations in the course of the work:



Some of the themes in the work bear a family resemblance to others in *Messidor* and *L'Attaque du Moulin.*

The opening scene describing the departure of the fishing-boats has a charming colour, and the song of the fishermen is fluently melodious. The dialogue between the sisters, the arrival of Richard, are noteworthy features in the first act.

After an orchestral introduction founded upon some of the most prominent themes, the second act opens and discloses the poetical surroundings of the valley in the Baie de Grâce. Lulu sings a slumber song of penetrating charm, and this is succeeded by one of the principal scenes in the opera, the love duet between Richard and Jeanine. After all the music which has been inspired by the tender passion, it would seem difficult for a composer to find accents at once new and appropriate, especially in a scene like the present, which, without absolutely recalling it, is not without affinity to that in the second act of *Tristan.* Bruneau has, however, remained individual in his treatment of a difficult situation. In one place he has obtained a remarkable effect by the employment of a quintet of strings and a celesta behind the scenes, playing one theme whilst another is heard in the orchestra.

Perhaps the most striking portion of the work is the third act, which is throughout dominated by the roar of the tempest raging outside and finding its echo in the hearts of the *dramatis personæ*. The effect of this is so great that after it the following act comes rather as an anticlimax.

If in *L'Ouragan*,* that tempestuous drama of love and passion, the authors laid their scene in an imaginary land, they adopted a diametrically opposite course in their next work, *L'Enfant-Roi*. The action here is laid in Paris at the present time, and amidst what might be considered as the most prosaic of surroundings, the first and fifth acts taking place in a pastrycook's shop, the second inside a toy shop in the Tuileries gardens, the third at the flower-market near the church of the Madeleine, and the fourth in the bakery belonging to the above-mentioned pastrycook. The *milieu* therefore is not precisely one which people would associate with a lyrical subject. The story, however, is a very touching one, and Zola has had a higher aim in view than merely to provide an interesting tale for operatic treatment, and has intended to lay special stress upon the important part played by the child in completing the happiness of married life.

François Delagrange, a pastrycook, and his wife form a happily wedded pair. Mme. Delagrange, however, has a secret which she has never liked to reveal

* *L'Ouragan* was interpreted at the Paris Opéra-Comique by the following artists: Mme. Jeanne Raunay (Jeanine), Mme. Delna (Marianne), Mdlle. Guiraudon (Lulu), M. Maréchal (Landry), M. Louis Bourbon (Richard), M. Dufrane (Gervais). This work has also been performed at Nantes.

to her husband. Before her marriage, when quite young, she had given birth to a boy, the father of whom had died soon after. Her son, who is now sixteen years old, has been brought up under the care of his grandmother, and every Tuesday on the pretext of visiting a poor relation, his mother has been in the habit of spending some hours with him. One day an anonymous letter sows jealous seeds into the heart of François Delagrange, who discovers the truth, and in a fury tells his wife that she must choose between her son and her husband and leave one or the other. The unfortunate woman cannot resign herself to abandon her son, and decides to leave the house. Once separated, the husband and wife gradually realise how much they were to each other, and at last Mme. Delagrange finds the separation unendurable and returns to her home. The boy has in the meanwhile been told how matters stand, and heroically offers to leave and go to some distant land. He comes to bid farewell to his mother. The husband now appears. He has no children of his own, and his heart is deeply touched by his wife's grief as well as by the boy's behaviour. His mind is suddenly made up, he will adopt the boy as his son. Thus the situation is solved in the best possible manner, every one is happy and the work ends joyfully.

"Un succès, un grand, incontestable, unanime, et juste succès. Combien je me réjouis de la chaleureuse estime témoignée à la mémoire d'un illustre écrivain ; combien je suis heureux des enthousiasmes qui ont acclamé l'effort neuf, et sincère, de M. Alfred Bruneau ! Aucun artiste contemporain, plus que celui-ci, ne s'impose à l'admiration par la virilité de la pensée, la

volonté du beau et du vrai, la probité du labeur, et par cette sereine patience devant les injustices, qui est la marque des hauts esprits, désintéressés, en somme, de tout, hormis l'accomplissement de leur devoir créateur; et, en vérité M. Alfred Bruneau apparaît comme une des plus nobles, et des plus pures entre les nouvelles gloires de France."

Thus wrote M. Catulle Mendès, the eminent writer and poet, after the first performance of *L'Enfant-Roi*, at the Opéra-Comique.

M. Gabriel Fauré, the present director of the Paris Conservatoire, and one of the most remarkable French composers of the day, was equally enthusiastic in his admiration of the music of Bruneau, although he made certain restrictions concerning the book.

After analysing and praising the music M. Gabriel Fauré concludes with these words:

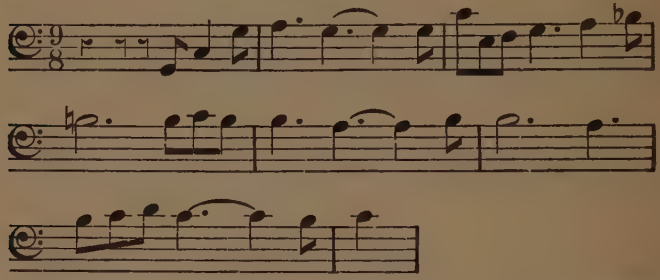
"J'ajouterai que d'un bout à l'autre de l'ouvrage l'orchestration est intéressante, d'une plénitude suffisante, sans que la variété des timbres en soit jamais obscurcie. Et j'ajouterai encore que *L'Enfant-Roi* représente une œuvre vigoureuse, de noble sentiment, de belle et sincère expression, et qu'elle fait honneur à la musique française."

If the book of *L'Enfant-Roi* is open to criticism on the score of its realism, the broad spirit of humanity which pervades it, the pathos of the situations arising from the conflict between maternal and conjugal love, impart unto it a special value.

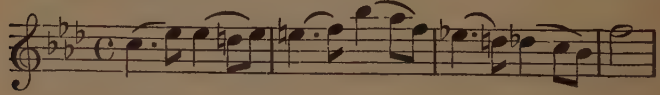
The musical treatment is worthy of all admiration, and represents the composer in the plenitude of his powers. The methods employed are those with which

we are now familiar. The thematic material is manipulated with masterly ease and sobriety of means, avoiding the undue complication which so often mars the efforts of modern composers. Bruneau's individuality asserts itself in his themes as well as in their treatment. A spirit of vitality animates the score from the first note to the last, and the sentiments expressed in the various scenes, whether pathetic or joyous, are faithfully reflected in the music.

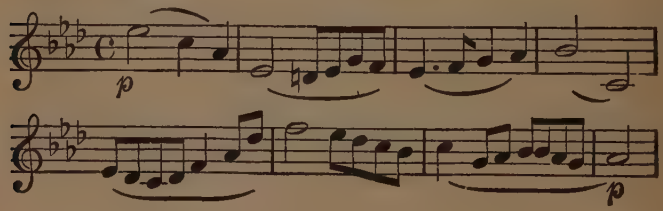
The spirit of Paris dominates the work, and is represented by the following theme:



Two other prominent themes are those typifying Conjugal Love:



and the Child:



These three themes first appear in the prelude and are employed throughout the work. Another theme had already figured in *Messidor*, where it typified the fertility of the land. Here, it is logically consecrated to the exaltation of the bread which nourishes Paris.

The dialogue between husband and wife in the first act is altogether admirable and must count among the composer's finest pages. Equally remarkable is the music during the secret interview between mother and son, and that of the final tableau when the husband nobly opens his arms to the child. The lighter scenes, in the pastrycook's shop, in the flower market, in the bake-house, are all treated with deftness and lightness of touch, and the characterisation of the different *dramatis personæ* is also worthy of all admiration.

The success of *L'Enfant-Roi* on its production in Paris was very great. Whether, however, it will take a permanent place in the operatic *répertoire* it is as yet too soon to say. That it deserves to do so there can be no possible doubt. Unfortunately, real merit in music is not invariably recognised, at all events at the outset. Many questions outside the domain of art are also apt to creep in and prevent certain works from acquiring that wide popularity to which they are entitled. The public as a rule is wary as regards a new opera, particularly when this differs greatly from the ordinary model. Even some of the operas which now enjoy the widest popularity have been coldly received at first, *Faust* and *Carmen* are there to prove this. In the case of *L'Enfant-Roi** the public of the Opéra-Comique unmistakably gave its verdict in the

composer's favour. This being so, the production of the work on other important stages ought to follow as a matter of course. If this does not happen, the loss will be that of the music-loving public at large, who will be deprived of the pleasure of hearing a work of very exceptional worth in all respects.

* *L'Enfant-Roi* was interpreted at the Paris Opéra-Comique by the following artists: Mdlle. Claire Friché (Madeleine), Mme. Marie Thierry (Georget), Mdlle. Tiphaine (Pauline), M. Dufranne (François), M. Jean Périer (Auguste), M. Vieuville (Toussaint).

CHAPTER VII

"NAÏS MICOULIN" AND "LA FAUTE DE L'ABBÉ MOURET"

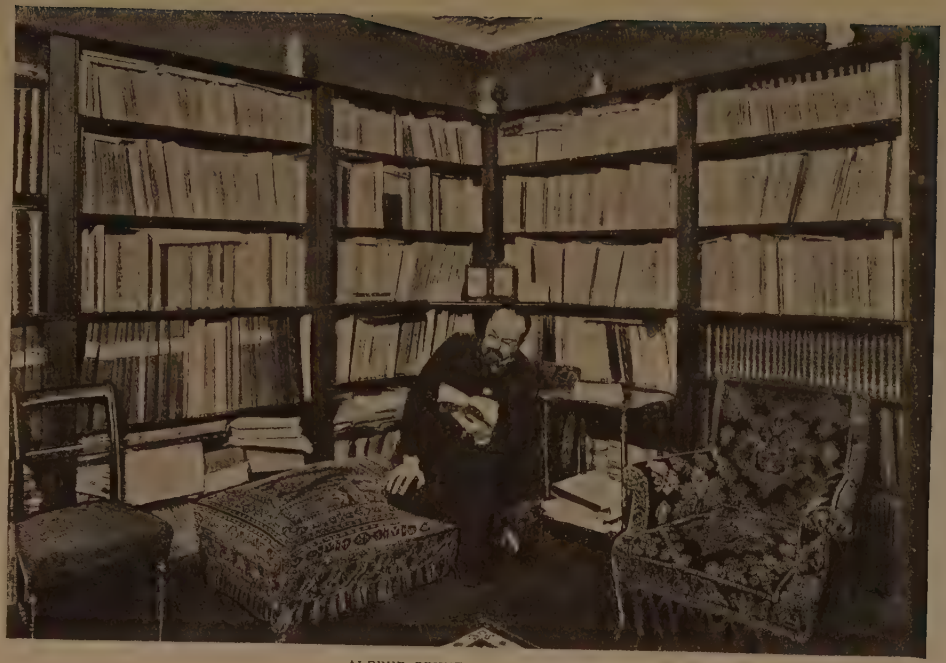
THE two above works were produced within a few weeks one of the other, the first at Monte Carlo on February 2, 1907, and the second at the Odéon Théâtre in Paris on the 28th of the same month. The bond of sympathy existing between Alfred Bruneau and Emile Zola was not destroyed by the death of the famous author, and if the former has now become his own librettist, he looks for his subjects among the works of his friend and collaborator.

"Naïs Micoulin" is one of a set of five tales by Emile Zola. A profoundly moving story of passion and devotion, it was particularly susceptible of being turned to account for operatic purposes, and this Bruneau has admirably succeeded in doing, producing a strong well-knit book of a vividly dramatic nature. The work is divided into two acts, the scene being laid on a cliff by the sea in the neighbourhood of Marseilles. Naïs Micoulin, the daughter of a fisherman, has allowed herself to be fascinated by a rich and worthless young man named Frédéric, who does not take the same serious views that she does of their relations. Her father suspects the mischief, and wishes to kill Frédéric,

but he is prevented from so doing by a certain Toine, who though ill-favoured in appearance is profoundly devoted to Naïs, whom he loves in a most unselfish manner. Frédéric, of course, tires of Naïs, and the drama culminates in the father being killed through the crumbling of the cliff, over which Naïs pushes her unfaithful lover, and is left to fulfil her destiny with Toine.

The conventional way of treating a story like the above can easily be imagined, and many a writer would doubtless not have lost the opportunity of introducing sundry *hors-d'œuvre* such as choruses of fishermen, dances, &c. Bruneau, however, has disdained to seek success by means of this sort, and has concentrated his attention entirely upon the logical development of the drama, expressing himself in strong, forcible language, and constructing a libretto admirably adapted for the purpose. The ending, by the way, is Bruneau's own invention. In the original story the father of Naïs is the only one to perish ; Frédéric being allowed to regain Marseilles, where six months later the news reaches him of the marriage of Naïs and Toine. The new version is undoubtedly more dramatic.

In his musical treatment, Bruneau has followed the methods which have previously served him so well, and the present score is quite as individual in expression as any he has written. Music and words are intimately allied one to the other. Warm, rich, and full-blooded, the strains are indeed well suited to illustrate a story so vivid and dramatic. The absolute sincerity of the composer makes itself felt in every bar, and irresistibly carries conviction. The prelude, with its broad harmonies and impassioned accents, foreshadows the love-scene between



ALFRED BRUNEAU IN HIS STUDY

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Naïs and the worthless Frédéric, and at once creates an atmosphere. Each of the personages is musically characterised, and it has been the composer's aim to suggest their natures rather than their physical appearance. The manner in which he has musically realised the character of Toine, the hunchback, is wholly admirable, and furnishes a veritable psychological study. The ill-favoured but devoted lover, though suffering tortures of jealousy, nobly sacrifices his feelings, and unselfishly declares to Naïs his intention of acting as her watch-dog in her love-affair, and protecting her from her father's wrath, although he warns her of the certain consequences of her infatuation.

"Tu ne veux pas souffrir," says Toine to Naïs, "Tu demandes l'irréalisable. Tu veux être heureuse. . . . Qui ne souhaitrait de l'être? Tu veux aimer. . . . T'en empêcherai-je parce que tu me dédaignes? . . . Non, non, ce serait trahir ta confiance en moi, ce serait indigne de l'homme que je suis et que tu vas connaître. Tu veux aimer, dis-tu! . . . Eh bien! aime donc Frédéric jusqu'au jour fatal de la séparation. Tu veux être aimée! . . . Sois-le donc par moi et apprends ce qu'est, en réalité, l'amour!"

The music of this scene is in the highest degree pathetic and emotional, tender yet sad, as if inspired by a vast pity. It gradually increases in intensity and acquires additional power as it proceeds, pervaded by a beautiful impassioned melody which bursts forth in its full splendour after the final words of Toine, "Aime donc et sois heureuse, dans l'âpre allégresse de mon sacrifice."

Bruneau has proved before how he excels in depict-

ing the heroism of self-sacrifice, one remembers the père Merlier in *L'Attaque du Moulin*. The following scene between Naïs and Frédéric is admirably treated. Night has fallen and the lights of Marseilles are seen in the distance. Naïs and her lover both apostrophise the city in turns, the one in accents of hatred, for she sees in it the place which will attract Frédéric away from her, while to him Marseilles represents the pleasures to which he is so intimately wedded.

The first act finishes in a most dramatic and striking manner. The lovers have fallen into each other's arms, when the father Micoulin appears with a hatchet in his hand and is about to slay Frédéric but is stopped by Toine who persuades him to go away.

In the second act the time of the year has changed to October. The scene is the same, but the sky is grey, and the outlook dreary. Toine is digging the earth by the side of the cliff, and as he works he sings a most original and striking invocation to the Earth:

Terre, terre, mère des hommes,
Obéis-moi!
Tu m'as créé de ton argile,
Pour me donner toute ta force.
Obéis-moi!

There are four more verses, all set to the same theme but differently accompanied. The drama gradually approaches its climax, and increases in interest until it culminates in the final catastrophe, and as the curtain descends the melody of Toine's self-sacrifice, combined with another prominent theme of the work, mournfully asserts itself. Thus ends a work which deserves to occupy a good place among the musical dramas of

Bruneau, and which inaugurates his *début* as a librettist in a very remarkable manner.

"La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret" is one of the most captivating works of Emile Zola, and it had long been Bruneau's desire to give it a musical setting. For some time the knowledge that Massenet had the same wish deterred him from so doing. The years passed, however, without the composer of *Manon* fulfilling his intention, and the project so long caressed was at last put into execution. Mr. Wakeling Dry, by the way, in his interesting biography of Puccini, states that the Italian composer had also thought of this subject for an opera. Bruneau's work, however, is not an opera, but a play, which he has encased in an admirable musical setting. The production of *La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret*, therefore, constitutes a fresh departure in the already well-filled career of the composer, who having shortly before proved his great qualifications as a librettist in *Naïs Micoulin* has now shown that he also possesses the capabilities of a dramatic author. Admirably staged at the Odéon theatre, under the supervision of M. Antoine, *La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret* achieved an instantaneous success.

The novel from which the play is adapted occupies a special place in the remarkable series of works built by Zola around the history of an imaginary family, members of which move in every grade of society, whereby the author has been enabled to follow his intention of describing life in all its phases without shrinking from alluding to some of its most repulsive details. M. Catulle Mendès has justly said that *La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret* is "certainly one of the strongest and most

splendid branches of the genealogical tree of the Rougon-Macquart."

The title of the book to a certain extent explains itself. The fault committed by the abbé Mouret consists in his falling a victim to the charms of a young girl who for a time causes him to forget his vows. It is a simple enough story which the author has clothed in beautiful word garments. Serge Mouret is a young priest with mystical ideas and a tender loving disposition, who expends the ardours of his nature in an overwhelming devotion to the Madonna. In strong contrast to this ingenuous young priest, striving with all his might to combat the natural instincts of nature, is Frère Archangias, a middle-aged, rough, fanatical cleric, looking upon the gentler sex with contempt and loathing. The abbé Mouret having overtaxed his brain and been seriously ill, has been sent by the village doctor to recruit, and, tended by Albine, a young girl of sixteen, has gradually recovered his health. Albine resides with an old uncle who does not in any way curtail her liberty, but allows her to roam about all day through a magnificent and disused park abounding in tropical flowers and known as Le Paradou. What happens may be imagined. The abbé is twenty-five years old. He and Albine wander at will through the wonderful Paradou, and everything is forgotten in the love which throws these young people into each other's arms. The sin has been committed, but the awakening follows shortly. The stern, unbending figure of Frère Archangias appears, and harshly recalls the priest to his duty. The dream is over. Albine tries in vain to regain her ascendency over her lover, but the spell has

been broken, Serge Mouret returns a penitent man to his presbytery, and the poor, forsaken child seeks death among the perfumed blossoms of the Paradou.

This story, the scene of which is laid under the burning sun of Provence, and amid the tropical wonders of the Paradou, is so human and at the same time so poetical that it seems to invite music.

Zola's description of the enchanting garden is a splendid example of word-painting: "Une mer de verdure, en face, à droite, à gauche, partout. Une mer roulant sa houle de feuilles jusqu'à l'horizon, sans l'obstacle d'une maison, d'un pan de muraille, d'une route poudreuse. Une mer déserte, vierge, sacrée, étalant sa douceur sauvage dans l'innocence de la solitude. Le soleil seul entrait là, se vautrait en nappe d'or sur les prés, enfilait les allées de la course échappée de ses rayons, laissait pendre à travers les arbres ses fins cheveux flambants, buvait aux sources d'une lèvre blonde qui trempait l'eau d'un frisson. Sous ce poudroiement de flamme, le grand jardin vivait avec une extravagance de bête heureuse, lâchée au bout du monde, loin de tout, libre de tout. C'était une débauche telle de feuillages, une marée d'herbes si débordantes, qu'il était comme dérobé d'un bout à l'autre, inondé, noyé. Rien que des pentes vertes, des tiges ayant des jaillissements de fontaine, des masses moutonnantes, des rideaux de forêt hermétiquement tirés, des mantaux de plantes grimpantes traînant à terre, des volées de rameaux gigantesques s'abattant de tous côtés."

It is this wonderful garden that Bruneau has attempted to evoke in sounds, and his music which

accompanies the various changes of scene describing the different parts of the Paradou is pregnant with suggestion and intensely poetical.

The work is preceded by an overture of important dimensions containing several of the leading themes which will subsequently re-appear in the different interludes. The first of these themes is the "Alma Redemptoris Mater," taken from the liturgy, first heard in its unadorned simplicity and intended to suggest the mystical aspirations of the abbé, then gradually becoming transformed into a burning expression of earthly passion. The first act takes place in the presbytery and except for a few bars at the close does not contain any music. In the second act we are transported to the Paradou, and here the composer has not lost his opportunity. A beautiful series of interludes depicts the various changes of scene. These interludes are entitled, "La Chambre d'Albine," "La Joie du Jardin," "Le Bois des Roses," "Des Roses aux Verger en traversant le Parterre," "L'Arbre," "Les Voix," "La Faute," and the act ends with the Angelus and the imprecation of Frère Archangias. The composer has been veritably inspired in his treatment of this act and has exhibited extraordinary descriptive power. "La Joie du Jardin" and "L'Arbre" may be singled out as really beautiful and individual examples of his genius. One may also note the original and peculiarly striking manner in which he has employed voices, *a boccha chiusa*, intended to evoke the voices of the garden. The effect is most poetical. The following act is laid in the church were the abbé has returned, and here there

is but little music. The last act takes us back again to the Paradou where another series of wonderfully suggestive interludes describes the closing scenes of the drama.

Albine dies amid the perfume of flowers, and Bruneau has so graphically and poetically described his intentions in the stage directions at the close of his drama that his words may as well be quoted here *in extenso :*

" Les mains jointes sur son cœur, elle continue à sourire, tandis que la symphonie parle seule. C'est, d'abord, un prélude gai, enfantin : ses mains, qui ont tordu les verdures odorantes, exhalent l'âpreté des herbes foulées, lui content ses courses de gamine au milieu des sauvageries du Paradou. Ensuite, un chant de flûte se fait entendre, de petites notes musquées qui s'égrènent du tas de violettes posé sur la table, près du chevet ; et cette flûte, brodant sa mélodie sur l'haleine calme, l'accompagnement régulier des lis de la console, chante les premiers charmes de son amour, le premier aveu, le premier baiser sous la futaie. Mais elle suffoque davantage, la passion arrive avec l'éclat brusque des œillets, à l'odeur poivrée, dont la voix de cuivre domine un moment toutes les autres. On croit qu'elle va agoniser dans la phrase maladive des soucis et des pavots, qui lui rappellent les tourments de ses désirs. Et, brusquement, tout s'apaise, elle respire plus librement, elle glisse à une douceur plus grande, bercée par la gamme descendante des quarantaines, se ralentissant, se noyant, jusqu'au cantique adorable des héliotropes, dont les haleines de vanille disent l'approche des noces. Les belles-de-nuit piquent çà et là un trille discret. Puis, il y a un silence. Les roses,

languissamment, font leur entrée. Du plafond coulent des voix, un chœur lointain. C'est un ensemble large, qu'elle écoute au début avec un léger frisson. Le chœur s'enfle, elle est bientôt toute vibrante des sonorités prodigieuses qui éclatent autour d'elle. Les noces sont venues, les fanfares des roses annoncent l'instant redoubtable. Les mains de plus en plus serrées contre son cœur, pamée, haletante, elle ouvre la bouche, cherchant le baiser qui doit l'étouffer, quand les jacinthes et les tubéreuses l'enveloppent d'un dernier soupir, si profond, qu'il couvre le chœur des roses. Albine meurt dans le hoquet suprême des fleurs."

Thus ends this very interesting and touching work, at once so realistic and so poetical, in which the composer has displayed his great individuality in the happiest manner.

Before writing *Naïs Micoulin* and *La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret*, Bruneau had composed *Lazare*, a work of an unconventional description, the score of which was written immediateiy after the death of Zola, and under the impression of the composer's profound grief at the loss of his friend. Bruneau has not shown this work to any one, but is purposely keeping it back until the moment when he considers it should be produced.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MUSICAL CRITIC

HAVING endeavoured to give some idea of the composer and his music, Bruneau's labours as a critic now claim consideration.

The profession of musical critic in Paris is in some respects different to what it is in London. One *feuilleton* a week, besides an account of any new opera, is the most that is expected from a French critic. This is indeed more than most French newspapers provide—a short account of the usual Sunday concerts and a notice of the *première* of any new opera being generally considered sufficient. In some cases the *feuilleton* appears about once a fortnight and includes the notice of the new opera, should there be one to notice, and comparatively few after all are brought out during the year. The Paris critic has therefore a fairly easy time of it in comparison with his English colleague. The numberless small concerts which are the plague of the London critic exist in Paris as well, but they are wisely left unmentioned. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that several French composers have found time to devote to criticism as well as to composition.

Berlioz of course led the way in this direction, and for many years wrote admirable criticisms in the *Journal*

des Débats, being succeeded on that paper by Ernest Reyer, the composer of *Sigurd*.

Adolphe Adam wrote musical criticisms, and even Offenbach once tried his hand at the work before he found his way to fame and fortune.

Among modern French composers several are, or have been, musical critics, notably Saint-Saëns, Reyer, the late V. Joncières, the late Samuel Rousseau, Widor, Debussy, and Gabriel Fauré. To these names must be added that of Bruneau, who has in turns been on the staff of the *Gil Blas* and the *Figaro*, and is now musical critic to the *Matin*.

Some of his criticisms have been republished in the volumes entitled "Musiques d'Hier et de Demain," "La Musique Française," and "Musiques de Russie et Musiciens de France." The second of these volumes contains an extremely interesting *résumé* of the history of French music from the thirteenth to the twentieth century. Bruneau had during the Exhibition of 1900 been named reporter of the *Commission des Grandes Auditions Musicales*, presided over by Camille Saint-Saëns, and his report of the proceedings presented to the Minister of Public Instruction of the special concerts devoted to French music was preceded by the above-mentioned account.

A part of the third volume is the outcome of a journey to Russia officially undertaken. It contains some curious information concerning music in St. Petersburg. An excellent German translation of "La Musique Française" and "La Musique Russe" by Max Graf has been published in the series entitled "Die Musik," edited by Richard Strauss.

In his criticisms Bruneau displays a broad-mindedness which is particularly worthy of note, although he always speaks out his mind and says what he thinks. There are different ways of stating adverse opinions, and he does not cultivate the sledge-hammer style adopted by some writers, neither does he follow the example of others in endeavouring to raise a laugh at the expense of the composer or artist he may be criticising. If a new work does not conform with his ideals he says so plainly, but does not necessarily on that account condemn it. Again, while his musical sympathies are distinctly progressive, he none the less cherishes the works of the great masters and loses no opportunity of expressing all the admiration he entertains for them. His criticisms, indeed, impress one as eminently sincere, logical, and well thought out, besides which they are remarkable for excellence of literary style.

A few samples of Bruneau's writings cannot fail to prove interesting, and will serve to give an idea of his opinions, although in translation much of the beauty of the original language is necessarily lost.

In writing of *Fidelio* he strongly combated the idea so long prevalent that Beethoven did not possess the qualifications of an *homme de théâtre*. "Not an *homme de théâtre*, great heavens!" he wrote in an outburst of indignation, "the dramatic poet of the Symphonies, the Sonatas, the last Quartets, the Mass in D . . . and all the rest! But, in order to think that, what idea can we have, musically speaking, of an *homme de théâtre*, and is the function of such a one so badly judged that we should consider a Beethoven incapable of filling it?

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Evidently if, under the pretext that a man supposed to understand the theatre addresses himself to simple-minded crowds, his work consists in writing as rapidly and as negligently as possible expressionless, commonplace or superficial pieces, in view of direct effect, immediate success, large gains, according to this view Beethoven was not an *homme de théâtre*, and his only opera, opposed to so many operas by those who are usually termed *hommes de théâtre*, is not a theatrical work. But if *l'homme de théâtre*, with no other thought than to obey his heart, to note its tempests, attributes to himself the high and noble mission to elevate souls by beautiful songs of truth, of tenderness, of love, of hate, of suffering, of happiness, and of passion, Beethoven assuredly was an *homme de théâtre*, and was as much in his place in the theatre as he was in the concert-room, in the church or elsewhere, and *Fidelio* is as much a theatrical masterpiece as *Don Juan*."

That Bruneau should be one of the enthusiastic admirers of Wagner stands to reason. It is also, perhaps, natural that his favourite among the music dramas of the German master should be the *Meistersinger*, concerning which he once expressed himself in the following words of eloquent enthusiasm :

" If, for a long time and without ever having changed my opinion on the point, I have admired in their entirety the colossal and superhuman works of Wagner, as every one does to-day, forgetting the revolts, the cries, the abuse, the condemnation of the first hour, I keep a very ancient, very fervent, very decided predilection for the *Meistersinger*. This is the reason: Certainly, I do not know anything more emotional, more sublime,

more divine, in the absolute sense of the word, than the mystical drama of *Parsifal*, where human suffering is abolished by celestial grace, where the evil here below is vanquished by the good from above, and I defy the man with the least tender heart to remain unmoved by it. Again, I believe that from no volcano could come forth incendiary lava such as that which, boiling, incessantly increasing, burns and corrodes the pages of the score of *Tristan and Isolde*, and I think that if the earth were ever to freeze and to become the enormous mass of ice some people imagine, the thought of those two entwined names would still suffice to join together lovers who through the centuries will feel the beauty of the entrancing strains of this sovereign poem of passion and death. Then again, the giants and the gods, the valkyries and the mermaids, the gnomes and the dwarfs, the chaos and the worlds, the dawns and sunsets, the flames and the waters, everything which in the four parts of the *Nibelungen Ring* strives and kills, fights and triumphs, shines in the legendary sun or disappears in prehistoric gloom, fills us with a sort of stupor due to the gigantic proportions of the work, its prodigious scope, its miraculous and abnormal conception. And *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser*, showing us the unknown, opening to us the gates of the ideal, a pagan ideal and a Christian ideal, also enchant us, while the tempest of the *Flying Dutchman*, so violently and so fiercely poetical, vividly impresses us. But the *Meistersinger*, drama of souls, comedy of sentiments, represents life, the simple familiar life that we live ourselves, the life of yesterday, of to-day, of to-morrow, the life of our heart and of

our mind, and this seems to me finer still than all the rest."

Bruneau does not approve of the attitude of certain young composers of the present day who treat Gounod's music with disdain. In writing of the composer of *Faust* he says: "He enveloped his lovers in an atmosphere of sounds which added an enchanting poetry to their fascination. It is in the delineation of love that Gounod's strong originality was best expressed, and here his sincerity was so great that he lent his own sentiments to most of the characters in his operas rather than attempted to study their different psychology."

Bruneau's sympathies are very wide and comprehensive, Gluck, Mozart and Beethoven, Schumann, Wagner, Berlioz and César Franck being among his favourite composers.

He is also a great admirer of Richard Strauss, and considers the most remarkable of the German master's works to be "Heldenleben," concerning which he thus writes: "I cannot express the emotion I felt in listening to this magnificent symphonic piece. With an incomparable orchestral mastery, to which is added an enormous caricatural faculty, M. Richard Strauss exposes, develops, mingles the seventy themes which form the materials of his monument of tone. But I place far above such a mastery, however astonishing this be, the musical idea of the author, the humanity of his conception. The admirable artist has here placed all his joys, all his sufferings, all his hopes, all his discouragements, all his enthusiasms, all his ndignations, and even all his labours, for, in the episode of the works of

peace, he has brought in the principal motives of his own works. Its truth probably accounts for its beauty. I know of nothing more moving, more lofty, more noble than the splendid conclusion of this work, and I thank M. Strauss for the indelible impressions he has given me."

The short specimens of Bruneau's writings given above will suffice to show that the qualities he prizes above all others in a composer are sincerity and truth of expression. They are typical of the man and the musician, and reveal all the enthusiasm of his nature, his hatred of shams, disdain of all compromise, and fearless devotion to that which is his artistic ideal. A writer has stated that had Bruneau lived in an age of faith he would have personified with admirable intensity the type of the mediæval monk, ready to risk everything in the sacred cause of his belief.

It is by men so constituted that great works are accomplished. Had Bruneau tried to gain the ear of the public by a sacrifice of principles he might very likely have won an ephemeral popularity. This he has disdained to do, and his works are there to prove whether he has been wrong.

The true artist lives in a world of his own, and finds consolation for the various tribulations that beset him in his onward path in the knowledge that he has been true to himself. Bruneau has admirably expressed this idea in the following words:

"Que de pauvres hommes, hélas! se torturent sans songer que, en art, le succès obtenu n'est rien, que l'effort accompli est tout."

ALFRED BRUNEAU'S WORKS

Op. 1. Deux pièces pour violoncelle (1877). (Girod.)
Op. 2. "Jeanne d'Arc," scène lyrique (1878). (Girod.)
Op. 3. "Cinq mélodies" (1879). (Girod.)
Op. 4. "Geneviève," cantate de prix de Rome (1881). (Girod.)
Op. 5. Romance pour cor (1882). (Hamelle.)
Op. 6. Deux mélodies (1882). (Hamelle.)
Op. 7. "Léda," poème antique (1882). (Unpublished.)
Op. 8. Deux chœurs (1883). (Choudens.)
Op. 9. "Huit mélodies de jeunesse" (1883). (Choudens.)
Op. 10. Deux morceaux d'église: "Ave Maria," "O Salutaris." (Choudens.)
Op. 11. Romance pour flûte (1883). (Hamelle.)
Op. 12. Ouverture Héroique (1883). (Unpublished.)
Op. 13. "La Belle au bois dormant," poème symphonique. (Choudens.)
Op. 14. Trois mélodies (1885). (Leduc.)
Op. 15. *Kérim*, drame lyrique en trois actes (1886). (Choudens.)
Op. 16. Romance pour quatre clarinettes (1887). (Unpublished.)
Op. 17. *Les Bacchantes*, ballet en deux actes et trois tableaux. (Unpublished.)
Op. 18. "Penthésilée," poème symphonique avec chant (1886). (Choudens.)
Op. 19. Requiem, pour soli, chœurs, orchestre et grand orgue (1889). (Dupont.)
Op. 20. *Le Rêve*, drame lyrique en quatre actes. (Choudens.)
Op. 21. Dix lieds de France (1891). (Choudens.)
Op. 22. *L'Attaque du Moulin*, drame lyrique en quatre actes (1893). (Choudens.)
Op. 23. Six Chansons à danser (1894). (Choudens.)
Op. 24. Trois lieds de France (1896). (Dupont.)
Op. 25. *Messidor*, drame lyrique en quatre actes et cinq tableaux (1897). (Choudens.)

Op. 26. *L'Ouragan*, drame lyrique en quatre actes (1901) (Choudens.)
Op. 27. Fantaisie pour cor (1901). (Choudens.)
Op. 28. Chanson de l'amie bien belle (1904). (The Gramophone Company.)
Op. 29. *L'Enfant-Roi*, comédie lyrique en cinq actes (1905). (Choudens.)
Op. 30. *Lazare*, drame lyrique en un acte. (Unpublished.)
Op. 31. *La Faute de l'abbé Mouret*, pièce en quatre actes, tirée du roman d'Emile Zola. (Choudens.)
Op. 32. "*Naïs Micoulin*," drame lyrique en deux actes. (Choudens.)

The above dates refer to the completion of each work, not to its production.

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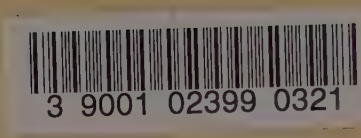
Besides the above, many articles on the composer have of course appeared in newspapers and reviews.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